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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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US intervention possible in Venezuela

BY CLAUDIA GRISALES
AND COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Pentagon leaders on Wednesday delivered a message to House lawmakers that U.S. military intervention is possible in Venezuela as the crisis in the South American country intensifies.

Acting Defense Secretary Pat Shanahan on Wednesday also made a last-minute decision to cancel a planned trip to Europe, citing the need to monitor the conditions in Venezuela, among other concerns.

Remaining in Washington would allow Shanahan to better “coordinate with National Security Council and the State Department in Venezuela” and also work with the Department of Homeland Security on military support along the U.S.-Mexico border, Army Lt. Col. Joe Buccino, the acting secretary’s spokesman, said in a statement.

“It’s extraordinarily fluid. It’s almost day-to-day,” Shanahan said of the Venezuela situation during a congressional hearing. “When people say all options are on the table, they really are.”

On Tuesday, Venezuelan opposition leader Juan Guaido called for protesters to take to the streets to demand the ouster of the government of President Nicolas Maduro.

The demand led to violent encounters in the streets in the country’s capital city of Caracas between troops and protesters. By night’s end, Maduro claimed to have quashed an attempted coup.

Shanahan’s Capitol Hill testimony mirrored comments Wednesday by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, who told Fox Business Network that “military action is possible” in Venezuela.

Shanahan was slated to meet later Wednesday with Pompeo, Marine Gen. Joseph Dunford, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and others on the Venezuela crisis.

Dunford, who also testified in the House alongside Shanahan on Wednesday, said the U.S. military was closely monitoring the ongoing situation.

The comments come a day after President Donald Trump wrote on Twitter that he was closely monitoring the situation in Venezuela. On Tuesday, Trump and Vice President Mike Pence said the United States stands with the people of the embattled country.

Shanahan said in terms of Venezuela, top leaders have done exhaustive planning and there’s not a scenario for which they don’t have a contingency plan. They are also working closely with Colombia and Brazil, taking a regional approach, he added.

Not far from Wednesday’s House Appropriations Committee subpanel hearing, another congressional panel was also raising questions about the military’s potential role in Venezuela.

Rep. Adam Smith, D-Wash., chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, told military leaders for U.S. Northern and Southern Commands at a hearing before his panel that there have to be limits to the roles that the military could play in Venezuela.

“I am concerned... that we would think there is some sort of role for the U.S. military given our history down there and given what we’ve learned about using the military to sort of change governments,” Smith said. “You do not see a role for the U.S. military in actually overthrowing the Maduro government, correct?”

Adm. Craig S. Faller, commander of U.S. Southern Command, told Smith that the military continues to work with its regional partners and support diplomacy efforts. He also said they are evaluating the potential evacuation of Americans in the face of increasing danger.

“Our leadership’s been clear, it has to be ... a democratic transition,” Faller said, waving off Smith’s concerns. “We are in total support of diplomacy and we stand ready to support that effort.”

Venezuelans take to the streets for 2nd day of protests

Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela — Wary Venezuelans emerged on the streets of the nation’s capital Wednesday waving their nation’s tricolor flag and banging pots and pans, hoping to drum up momentum after opposition leader Juan Guaido’s bold attempt to spark a military uprising that has thus far failed to tilt the balance of power.

Thousands gathered to demand President Nicolas Maduro’s ouster in what could be another critical day in the nation’s struggle between Maduro’s widely detested socialist

government and Guaido’s opposition movement, backed by powerful allies like the United States but unable to secure the loyalty of key factions, including the military.

Guaido’s plans largely appeared to have floundered as high-ranking defections failed to materialize.

“I don’t want to say it was a disaster, but it wasn’t a success,” Marilina Carillo, 54, said, standing in a crowd of people blowing horns and whistles.

As the protests got underway Wednesday, security forces launched tear gas at a small

group of protesters in the western Caracas neighborhood of El Paraiso. National guardsmen dismounted from motorcycles to disperse the crowd, firing rubber bullets. Demonstrators, some covering their faces against the tear gas fumes, grabbed the gas canisters and tossed them back.

Guaido, speaking before a thick crowd of supporters elsewhere in the capital, urged Venezuelans to remain on the streets and begin taking steps toward a general strike to ramp up pressure on Maduro.

“It’s totally clear now the usurper has lost,” he declared,

despite the lack of mass military defections.

A defiant Maduro, who had been absent throughout most of Tuesday, emerged on state television late at night surrounded by his closest advisers and blasting Guaido’s move as a U.S.-backed coup attempt.

“This cannot go unpunished,” he said.

The bold and risky move by Guaido, 35, who is recognized by more than 50 nations as Venezuela’s rightful president, is likely to force Maduro to make a decision on whether to let his adversary remain a free man.

Sailors cheer Pence's Truman announcement

The Virginian-Pilot

NORFOLK, Va. — The Trump administration is dropping its pitch to mothball the USS Harry S. Truman at its midlife point.

Vice President Mike Pence made the announcement Tuesday during an all-hands call aboard the Truman at Naval Station Norfolk.

"We are keeping the best carrier in the world in the fight. We are not retiring the Truman," Pence said, adding, "The USS Harry S. Truman is going to be giving 'em hell for many more years to come."

That phrase — "give 'em hell" — is a reference to the carrier's battle cry.

Pence's announcement, amid weeks of debate over the future of the carrier, was met with cheers from hundreds of sailors. A Pentagon budget proposal called for retiring the Truman halfway through its intended 50-year service life by skipping its mid-life refueling, scheduled to begin in 2024.

Bypassing that overhaul would save about \$3.4 billion, the Navy estimated, money that it could reinvest elsewhere.

That trade-off would have run counter to the Trump administration's plans to bulk-up the size of the Navy fleet to an

Sailors were told to 'clap like we're at a strip club'

Stars and Stripes

The USS Truman's senior enlisted sailor told service-members to "clap like we're at a strip club" to welcome Vice President Mike Pence on Tuesday, a Navy spokeswoman confirmed.

Brendan Ponton was on the scene Tuesday for Virginia television station WTKR to report on Pence's tour and remarks aboard the ship, which was in Norfolk. He tweeted about the instructions the sailors were given: "Sailors being in-

structed to 'clap like we're at a strip club' when VP arrives (not kidding)."

"We can confirm that this statement was made by USS Harry S. Truman's Command Master Chief to Truman's Sailors, prior to the arrival of the Vice President," Lt. Cmdr. Laura Stegherr told CNN in a statement.

She said the comment was "inappropriate, and this issue is being addressed by Truman's leadership."

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eventual 355 ships.

It would also reduce the carrier fleet from 11 to 10 — a course reversal from 2017, when President Donald Trump visited Newport News Shipbuilding and called for a 12-carrier fleet. Federal law also states that the Navy must keep no fewer than 11 operational aircraft carriers. The Navy's own force assessment in 2016

included a requirement for 12.

The proposal to retire Truman early, which came amid a deal to purchase two carriers at once, was strongly opposed by Hampton Roads lawmakers. Sen. Mark Warner, D-Va., called the original plan a "budget gimmick" in a tweet. "While I am glad the administration ultimately reconsidered this terrible idea, the incoher-

ence here has not been good for morale or defense planning," Warner wrote.

Sen. Tim Kaine, a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, said in a statement that the decision was the "right call for our national security."

Rep. Elaine Luria, who served two years on the Truman and is a member of the House Armed Services Committee, said in a statement that retiring the Truman early would have been "an awful decision for Hampton Roads and America."

The fallout from canceling the Truman's refueling, a four-year process called RCOH, would be felt not only at the Newport News shipyard but across the thousands of businesses that supply the shipbuilder across the nation. As the sole designer and builder of nuclear-powered carriers for the Navy, it is also the only shipyard capable of handling the RCOH.

Pence told reporters following the all-hands call that he met with Trump at the White House on Tuesday morning. Trump "made the decision on the spot" after the two discussed the Truman and its sailors' contributions to the Navy, Pence said.

No new child care facilities planned in Navy's budget

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Navy and Marine Corps leadership were grilled Tuesday on Capitol Hill about why they had not planned for new child care facilities in the proposed fiscal year 2020 budget as thousands of families wait for openings.

"What is the problem here about not providing more day care services?" asked Rep. Pete Visclosky, D-Ind., chairman of the defense subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee. "You've got 7,800 — over 8,000 people under your commands waiting for day care here. And there's no plans in [fiscal year 2020] to increase that capacity."

About 68% of the Navy's child care waitlist is in heavily populated installations,

Visclosky said. He listed those areas as San Diego, Hawaii, the District of Columbia metropolitan area and Norfolk, Va.

The Marine Corps has a waitlist of 573 people, but Visclosky did not say where in the country the service is most affected.

The Navy is not planning to add more child care development centers or family care homes in 2020, he said, adding that its number of facilities has not changed in two years. The Marine Corps is also not expanding its number of day care centers and has not for years.

The Navy is increasing its day care spending on existing facilities in its fiscal year 2020 budget by \$7 million, according to Visclosky. He said the Marine Corps is requesting to spend \$11.8 million less than it did two fiscal years ago.

"I think of people wanting to serve in the military and worried about their children" and will only be at a base for a few years, Visclosky said.

Adm. John Richardson, chief of naval operations, said he agreed with Visclosky and reiterated what Navy Secretary Richard Spencer said in his opening remarks at the hearing — that "you can recruit a sailor, but you're going to retain a family. And a lot of those decisions are going to be made based on child care."

The Navy is meeting about 75% of its total projected child care need and "looking forward to expanding that capacity," Richardson said. The quality of the child care is about right, he said, but it just doesn't have enough.

US soon to unveil new Indo-Pacific strategy

BY CAITLIN DOORNBOS
Stars and Stripes

The Department of Defense will reveal a new Indo-Pacific strategy at an international conference on defense in Singapore this month, according to a Tuesday report by U.S. Naval Institute News.

Acting Secretary of Defense Pat Shanahan will discuss details of the new Indo-Pacific strategy at the upcoming Shangri-La Dialogue from May 31 through June 2, the report said.

“Our National Defense Strategy and National Security Strategy identify the Indo-Pacific as the priority theater, and I think Secretary Shanahan will talk about that at Shangri-La and what it means to be a priority theater,” Assistant Secretary of Defense for Indo-Pacific Security Affairs Randall Schriver said at a media roundtable last week in Malaysia, according to USNI News.

The Shangri-La Dialogue is a summit on defense in Asia where defense leaders “debate the region’s most pressing security challenges, engage in important bilateral talks and come up with fresh solutions together,” according to the summit’s website.

The U.S. focus on the Indo-Pacific has grown over the past decade. In March, Shanahan testified before Congress that the 2020 DOD budget proposal was shaped by national security threats from China.

Of the four states listed as threats in the 2018 National Defense Strategy, half are in the Indo-Pacific region — China, for its expanding influence in the Pacific and militarization of islands and reefs in the South China Sea, and North Korea for its nuclear weapons development.

Further information on what the new strategy might hold was not available Wednesday.

US watchdog says Afghans may not be ready for peace

Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — Afghanistan may not be ready for peace unless it finds a way to reintegrate Taliban fighters into society, combat corruption and rein in the country’s runaway narcotics problem, a U.S. watchdog said Wednesday.

The warning by Washington’s Special Inspector General for Afghan Reconstruction, or SIGAR, which monitors billions of dollars in U.S. aid to the country, came in the group’s new quarterly report that also discusses Afghan needs for the “day after” — once there is a peace deal with the Taliban.

Over the past months, the U.S. has stepped up efforts to find a peaceful resolution to Afghanistan’s 17-year war and has been holding talks with a resurgent Taliban. The insurgents, however, refuse to negotiate with the Kabul government, which they consider a U.S. puppet. The Taliban also continue to stage near-daily at-

tacks, inflicting staggering casualties, and now control about half the country.

“No matter how welcome peace would be, it can carry with it the seeds of unintended and unforeseen consequences,” John F. Sopko, head of SIGAR, said in the report.

The war has already cost America \$737 billion, according to the Pentagon. On reconstruction alone, the U.S. has spent \$132 billion since 2002, much of that to train and equip Afghan security forces as well as strengthen government institutions and provide education and better health care, said Sopko.

But the gains are fragile, Sopko said, and solutions are needed to the country’s increasing insecurity, “endemic corruption, weak Afghan institutions, the insidious impact of the narcotics trade, and inadequate coordination and oversight by donors.”

Sopko said that failure to re-

integrate the estimated 60,000 Taliban fighters and their families into Afghan society would undermine peace.

“These ‘day after’ risks could threaten U.S. taxpayers’ investment in Afghanistan, set back humanitarian and development programs, undermine Afghan government support, or even lay the grounds for new or resumed discord,” Sopko said.

For some former Taliban fighters, the transition has been difficult. They blame corruption, and for those not integrated into Afghan security forces, finding a job is difficult in a country where unemployment is more than 40% percent and 54% of Afghans live below the poverty line.

Sopko said the Department of Defense estimates it will cost \$6.5 billion to finance Afghanistan’s security needs in 2019 — \$4.9 billion of which will be paid by the U.S. The rest will be funded by other donor countries.

US stops tracking who controls parts of Afghanistan

BY PHILLIP WALTER WELLMAN
Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan — The U.S.-led coalition in Afghanistan has stopped assessing which districts in the country’s 34 provinces are controlled by the government or by insurgents, meaning nearly every metric to measure success of America’s longest war is now either classified or no longer tracked.

For about three years, NATO’s Resolute Support mission had produced quarterly district-level stability assessments that counted the districts, total estimated population and total estimated land area that Kabul controlled or influenced, as well as those under the sway of insurgents and those contested by both sides.

Officials have stopped the assessments because they were “of limited decision-making value” to Army Gen. Scott Miller, commander of the Resolute Support mission, the coalition told the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, according to a quarterly report published late Tuesday.

The last district-stability data NATO’s Resolute Support mission provided to SIGAR and

published in January showed that as of October 2018, Kabul’s control or influence over the country’s 407 districts was at its lowest level since the watchdog started tracking the figures in late 2015. There are officially 398 districts in the country, but the coalition assessment includes a city and eight temporary districts.

Taliban insurgents have been expanding their influence in rural areas, and while they’ve yet to seize a major city, they’re believed to be stronger than at any point since the war began more than 17 years ago — a major boon for the group as it continues direct negotiations with the U.S. aimed partly at an American troop withdrawal.

In January, the Pentagon told SIGAR that the models for calculating district stability were not wholly reliable and that the measurements were “not indicative of effectiveness” of the Trump administration’s South Asia strategy or of progress toward overall stability.

It’s “more important to instead focus on the principal goal of the strategy of concluding the war in Afghanistan on terms favorable to Afghanistan and the United States,” the Pentagon said.

Barr defends rollout of Mueller report

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Private tensions between Justice Department leaders and special counsel Robert Mueller's team broke into public view in extraordinary fashion Wednesday as Attorney General William Barr pushed back at complaints over his handling of the Trump-Russia investigation report and aimed his own criticism at the special counsel.

Testifying for the first time since releasing Mueller's report, Barr said he was surprised Mueller did not reach a conclusion on whether President Donald Trump had tried to obstruct justice, and that he felt compelled to step in with his own judgment that the president had committed no crime.

"I'm not really sure of his reasoning," Barr said of Mueller's obstruction analysis, which neither accused the president of a crime nor exonerated him. "I think that if he felt that he shouldn't go down the path of

making a traditional prosecutive decision, then he shouldn't have investigated. That was the time to pull up."

The airing of disagreements over the handling of the report was notable given the highly secretive nature of the special counsel's investigation and the public appearance for at least most of the probe that the Justice Department and Mueller's team were unified in approach. Barr sought to minimize the rift by suggesting the special counsel's concerns were largely about process, not substance.

Barr's appearance Wednesday before the Senate Judiciary Committee gave him his most extensive opportunity to explain the department's actions, including his press conference held before the Mueller report's release. It was also a forum for him to repair a reputation bruised by allegations that he's the Republican president's protector and by the emergence of a private letter from Mueller that criticized his handling of the report.

Democrats seized on the daylight between the two men to attack Barr's credibility and accuse him of unduly spinning Mueller's report in the president's favor. They also pressed him on whether he had misled Congress last month when he professed ignorance about complaints from the special counsel's team. Barr suggested he had not lied because he was in touch with Mueller himself and not his team.

While Democratic senators bluntly questioned Barr's actions, Republicans, in addition to defending Trump, focused on the president's 2016 Democratic opponent, Hillary Clinton's, email and campaign practices and what they feel is a lack of investigation of them. Barr has also been invited to appear Thursday before the Democratic-led House Judiciary panel, but the Justice Department said he would not testify if the committee insisted on having its lawyers question the attorney general.

Harrigian gets 4th star, USAFE-AFAFRICA helm

BY JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

RAMSTEIN AIR BASE, Germany — Airmen in Europe and Africa welcomed a new leader Wednesday, a seasoned fighter pilot who's already had a stint of on-the-job training.

Gen. Jeffrey L. Harrigian assumed command of U.S. Air Forces in Europe and Air Forces Africa from Gen. Tod D. Wolters at a ceremony presided over by some of the military's top commanders, including Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. David L. Goldfein.

Harrigian, a fighter pilot who has flown more than 4,000 hours in the F-22 and F-15C, among other airframes, has worked with Wolters as his deputy commander since last fall.

That assignment is one of three tours Harrigian had in Europe in the last 15 years, said Gen. Curtis M. Scaparrotti, U.S. European Command commander and NATO Supreme Allied Commander Europe. That experience gives

Harrigian "significant regional expertise," Scaparrotti said, making him "the right leader at the right time" for USAFE-AFAFRICA.

On Monday, the Senate confirmed Harrigian's nomination to lead USAFE-AFAFRICA. Hours before Wednesday's ceremony, he received his fourth star.

Wolters, meanwhile, is slated to take charge of EUCOM and NATO Allied Command Operations from Scaparrotti at a ceremony on Thursday. He has led USAFE-AFAFRICA since August 2016.

Harrigian will lead some 32,000 airmen in his new command at a time when much of the Air Force focus in Europe continues to be upon improving readiness and supporting allies, while keeping a close watch on Russia. The Air Force has invested millions of dollars into building up infrastructure at bases in former Eastern Bloc countries, such as Poland and Estonia.

Two dead in shooting at UNCC; student charged

Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — A student with a pistol and no immediately apparent motive is accused of killing two people and wounding four others at the University of North Carolina-Charlotte before campus police disarmed and arrested him, authorities said. The campus police chief said the suspect had not appeared on their radar as a potential threat.

"I just went into a classroom and shot the guys," the suspect, Trystan Andrew Terrell, told reporters Tuesday as officers led him away in handcuffs.

People reacting to the sound of gunshots and a campus alert scrambled to find safe spaces and endured a lengthy lockdown as officers secured the campus on the last day of classes. Hundreds were later marched out of buildings with their hands in the air before officers determined that the suspect appeared to have acted alone.

A vigil was planned for Wednesday, and the governor vowed a hard look to see what can be done to prevent future attacks.

"A student should not have to fear for his or her life when they are on our campuses," Gov. Roy Cooper, a Democrat, told reporters. "Parents should not have to worry about their students when they send them off to school. And I know that this violence has to stop. ... In the coming days we will take a hard look at all of this to see what we need to do going forward."

Campus Police Chief Jeff Baker said authorities received a call in the late afternoon that someone with a pistol had shot several students. Officers assembling nearby for a concert rushed to the classroom building and arrested the suspect in the room where the shooting took place.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Dome covered with superhero's shield

MA CAMBRIDGE — Student pranksters at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology struck again, drawing inspiration from America's hottest movie.

MIT students over the weekend draped the university's signature Great Dome with a giant cloth version of Captain America's red, white and blue shield.

Their efforts drew a Twitter "Very cool!" from actor Chris Evans, the Massachusetts native who plays Captain America in "Avengers: Endgame."

The shield went up Saturday night and was taken down Monday morning.

MIT students have for generations centered similar pranks, which they call "hacks," on the dome.

Pickup explodes at Burger King drive-thru

AR BEEBE — A man who was driving his pickup through a central Arkansas Burger King drive-thru suffered severe burns after the vehicle exploded at the window.

Ron Daniel told KARK that he had just picked up a propane tank and decided to stop for a couple of burgers when he heard a hissing sound and realized the tank was leaking. As he went to turn the tank's valve off, it burst into flames.

Daniel, 78, said he walked a few feet away to wait for emergency services. Soon after, the truck exploded.

Dog that got impaled expected to recover

NJ ENGLEWOOD — Authorities said a dog that fell from a fourth-floor unit

at an apartment building and became impaled on a lamppost is expected to make a full recovery.

The female basset hound named Libby was alone in the unit at the Brownstones at Englewood South when she jumped through a window screen.

The spike at the top of the lamppost pierced the top of Libby's left front leg, and the dog ended up suspended about 20 feet in the air.

Englewood firefighters used an aerial ladder to retrieve Libby and took her to a veterinarian for treatment.

Eaglet is fed fish snagged with hooks

PA PITTSBURGH — Authorities say a bald eagle carried a fish snagged with multiple hooks and fishing line back to its Pittsburgh nest and fed it to one of the two eaglets, but it's unclear whether the young bird swallowed a hook.

Executive Director Jim Bonner, of the Audubon Society of western Pennsylvania, told the Tribune-Review that the case is "a cautionary tale for debris left such as fishing line."

Both eaglets seemed in good health afterward, but Audubon and others will continue to monitor them.

Town votes to raze 144-year-old house

IL NAPERVILLE — The Chicago suburb of Naperville voted to demolish a 144-year-old house.

The Naperville Sun reported that the two-story home in the city's historic district has been unoccupied for years.

A vote to recommend demolition was tied 4-4 at the Naperville Historic Preservation

Commission, but the city council approved it.

Matt Goodman, a lawyer who represents potential buyers of the property, said the house is in "complete disrepair."

SS Selma could fully sink within 15 years

TX GALVESTON — Fans of a near-century-old concrete ship that has been partly submerged in the Houston Ship Channel since 1922 warn it could be fully underwater in 15 years.

The Galveston County Daily News reported that the SS Selma launched from Mobile, Ala., in June 1919. It was abandoned after hitting a reef near Pelican Island that tore an unrepairable 60-foot hole in its hull.

The Selma was declared a Texas archaeological landmark in 1993 and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Lunch with Buffet auction in late May

NE OMAHA — Investor Warren Buffett has already raised nearly \$30 million for a California homeless charity over the years, and he's getting ready to auction off another private lunch.

The auction planned for later this month will be the 20th time Buffett has raised money for the Glide Foundation, which helps the homeless in San Francisco.

Buffett's first wife, Susie, introduced him to Glide after she volunteered there. She died in 2004, but the connection endured.

The bidding starts at \$25,000 on May 26 and runs all week. The winner can invite up to seven friends.

Residents compete to guess time of thaw

VT WEST DANVILLE — It's officially spring in one northeastern Vermont community, where people bought tickets to guess when a cinder block would fall through the ice at a local pond.

The cinder block went through the ice of Joe's Pond in West Danville on April 25 at 5:39 a.m.

Each year, the Joe's Pond Ice Out Contest asks participants to guess the date and time of the ice melt.

More than 13,000 tickets were sold, and the winner gets more than \$5,000. The remainder goes to the Joe's Pond Association.

The association's website says the contest was started in the 1980s as a result of cabin fever.

Cops: Fight over dog poop led to shooting

KY LOUISVILLE — Police in Kentucky said an argument over dog poop ended with a man shooting a woman in the face and repeatedly shooting another man.

The Courier Journal reported Glenn Gholar Jr., 38, pleaded not guilty to first-degree assault in the shooting. Louisville police said the two wounded people suffered serious injuries and were expected to survive.

Officers said Gholar and the two people were arguing about dog feces in a yard when he shot them.

They said he fled in a vehicle and was pulled over by police, who then saw a revolver in "plain view" in the car.

From wire reports

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Runner Semenya loses appeal to CAS

Associated Press

GENEVA — The sports world's highest court ruled Wednesday that Olympic champion Caster Semenya and other female runners like her with unusually high testosterone must take medication to reduce their levels of the male sex hormone if they want to compete in certain events.

In a landmark 2-1 decision, the Court of Arbitration for Sport upheld proposed rules issued by track's governing body, the IAAF, saying that they are discriminatory but that "such discrimination is a necessary, reasonable and proportionate means" of "preserving the integrity of female athletics."

The IAAF argued that unusually high, naturally occurring levels of testosterone in athletes like Semenya with

"intersex" characteristics that don't conform to standard definitions of male and female give them an unfair competitive advantage, and it decreed a maximum level for females.

The 28-year-old South African runner whose sculpted biceps and super-fast, blow-away-the-competition times have led others to question her accomplishments declared she will not be stopped by the ruling.

"I know that the IAAF's regulations have always targeted me specifically," Semenya said in a statement. "For a decade the IAAF has tried to slow me down, but this has actually made me stronger. The decision of the CAS will not hold me back. I will once again rise above and continue to inspire young women and athletes in

South Africa and around the world."

The two-time Olympic champion in the 800 meters will have to lower her testosterone levels if she wants to defend her world title in September in Doha, Qatar.

Semenya was traveling to Doha on Wednesday for the first Diamond League track meet of the season, where she is expected to race in the 800 on Friday. The Diamond League is an annual series of meets for the top athletes in the world, and the event is the last one before the new rules apply.

Testosterone strengthens muscle tone and bone mass. Because of that, it is against the rules for athletes to inject or swallow testosterone supplements. Some women have what is known as hyperandrogenism,

meaning they have naturally occurring levels that are unusually high.

The IAAF rules require women to reduce their levels below 5 nanomoles per liter of blood. According to the IAAF, most females, including elite athletes, have levels of testosterone circulating naturally in their bodies of 0.12 to 1.79 nanomoles per liter, while men have levels that can be dozens or even hundreds of times higher — typically 7.7 to 29.4.

Semenya's level is considered private medical information and has not been disclosed.

Semenya was legally recognized at birth as female, but her speed and muscular body have led others to cast doubt on the integrity of her track achievements throughout her career.

MLB roundup

Sabathia reaches 3,000th strikeout in loss

Associated Press

PHOENIX — CC Sabathia became the 17th player in major league history and third left-hander to reach 3,000 career strikeouts, but was outpitched by Arizona ace Zack Greinke in the Diamondbacks' 3-1 win over the New York Yankees on Tuesday night.

Sabathia (1-1) arrived in the desert needing three strikeouts to hit 3,000 and got them all in the third inning.

The milestone whiff came when he got John Ryan Murphy swinging, sending the Yankees pouring out of the dugout.

Sabathia became the first pitcher to reach 3,000 strikeouts since Atlanta's John Smoltz in 2008, and joined Randy Johnson and Steve Carlton as the only lefties to do it.

Wilmer Flores hit a solo homer and a run-scoring single off Sabathia. He allowed two runs and five hits, and struck out five before being lifted with two on and one out in the sixth inning.

Brewers 4, Rockies 3: Jesus Aguilar homered again and Milwaukee, held without a runner for five innings, broke through late and beat visiting Colorado.

The Brewers again played without NL

MVP Christian Yelich, who sat out with lower back soreness for the second straight game.

Astros 11, Twins 0: Gerrit Cole allowed one hit in seven innings, and visiting Houston backed him with three homers.

Pirates 6, Rangers 4 (11): Bryan Reynolds led off the 11th inning with his first career homer and Starling Marte then added a two-run shot as Pittsburgh ended its eight-game losing streak by beating host Texas.

Mets 4, Reds 3 (10): Rookie Pete Alonso hit a game-winning sacrifice fly off Cincinnati closer Raisel Iglesias in the 10th inning, and host New York rebounded from a blown ninth-inning lead.

Red Sox 5, Athletics 1: Rick Porcello pitched eight shutout innings and struck out a season-high eight as host Boston beat Oakland.

Indians 7, Marlins 4: Carlos Gonzalez hit a tiebreaking three-run homer, only his second extra-base hit of the season, and Cleveland beat host Miami.

Dodgers 10, Giants 3: David Freese hit a three-run homer, Justin Turner went deep for the first time this season and Los Angeles beat host San Francisco.

Tigers 3, Phillies 1: Miguel Cabrera had an RBI single and Niko Goodrum added a two-run homer to lift Detroit past host Philadelphia.

Cardinals 3, Nationals 2: Adam Wainwright pitched neatly into the seventh inning, helping himself by kicking the ball over to first for a key out, and St. Louis beat host Washington.

Padres 4, Braves 3: Franmil Reyes homered twice and drove in three runs, Eric Hosmer also went deep and rookie Chris Paddock turned in another impressive start, leading San Diego past host Atlanta.

Cubs 6, Mariners 5: Kyle Schwarber hit a two-run homer with two out in the eighth, and the Cubs earned their third consecutive victory.

Angels 4, Blue Jays 3: Brian Goodwin hit a tiebreaking homer in the eighth inning, and Griffin Canning struck out six while pitching into the fifth inning of his major league debut for host Los Angeles.

Vladimir Guerrero Jr. went 0-for-2 with two walks while playing the first road game of his career in his Hall of Fame father's home ballpark.

Durant, Warriors take 2-0 series lead

Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. — Kevin Durant and the Golden State Warriors brought it on both ends, kept their mouths shut and handled business at home against James Harden and the Rockets.

Now, the two-time defending champions are headed to Houston with a 2-0 lead in the Western Conference semifinal series.

Durant scored 29 points and established an early defensive tone against Harden, leading the Warriors past the Rockets 115-109 on Tuesday night as the focus refreshingly returned to basketball after two days of constant chatter about the officiating.

“Tonight I think it was a great officiated game,” Golden State’s Draymond Green said. “They let us be physical, both teams, and they made the calls they needed to make. It was kind of disheartening for a game that I love since I was a child to see the talk over the last two days was nothing about basketball

and everything about foul calls. Is that what this game is coming to?”

Harden got hit in both eyes early but was able to return and finished with 29 points and seven rebounds.

“I barely could see,” said Harden, who was treated with eye drops.

Boos regularly greeted both Harden and Chris Paul at deafening Oracle Arena, where the Rockets complained after a 104-100 Game 1 defeat that the officials missed foul calls when the Warriors closed out on Houston’s three-point shooters.

Paul celebrated and cheered when Harden drew a foul on Durant in the closing seconds of the third. Harden converted three free throws to pull Houston within 82-75 going into the final 12 minutes.

Harden scored seven straight Houston points during one stretch midway through the fourth, including a three at 7:25 that got the Rockets within 92-89. Stephen Curry connected for a key three at the 6:31 mark

on the way to 20 points.

Harden’s eyes were still red and bothering him postgame.

“It’s pretty blurry right now. Hopefully it gets better day by day,” Harden said.

Klay Thompson scored 21 points and hit consecutive three-pointers late in the third. Green had 15 points, 12 rebounds — three on the offensive end over two possessions in the opening quarter — and seven assists.

Game 3 is Saturday in Houston.

Players on both sides stayed poised with cool heads.

“I felt like both teams, both coaches, just let the refs do their jobs all night,” Durant said. “I think the refs did an amazing job, the players did a great job, and the coaches.”

Durant set a tone when he took an early charge from Harden and blocked one of his shots as Houston committed five quick turnovers that led to 10 points. Andre Iguodala, who also handled much of the load defending Harden, added 16

points, five rebounds and four assists.

Curry dislocated his left middle finger in the first quarter but X-rays were negative and he returned with it taped.

Curry missed his first four three-point tries before hitting late in the first and played in foul trouble once more. He picked up his fourth with 6:43 in the third on a reach in, something he’s been working to stop doing.

Harden injured his eyes with 6:39 left in the first, grabbing at his face after he and Green fought for a loose rebound and Green’s left hand got Harden in the face.

When Harden went to the locker room with 6:27 left and a towel over his left eye for a cut, Green patted him on the back and checked to make sure he was OK. Harden returned at the 7:09 mark of the second.

“That’s him. I didn’t have a doubt he was coming back unless it was something catastrophic,” coach Mike D’Antoni said.

Antetokounmpo helps Bucks pull even with Celtics

Associated Press

MILWAUKEE — Giannis Antetokounmpo attacked the rim, Khris Middleton connected from long range and Eric Bledsoe turned in an effective performance.

The Milwaukee Bucks looked more like themselves in Game 2.

Antetokounmpo had 29 points and 10 rebounds and Middleton made seven of Milwaukee’s franchise playoff-high 20 three-pointers, helping the Bucks even their second-round playoff series against the Boston Celtics with a 123-102 victory Tuesday night.

Antetokounmpo, one of the top candidates for NBA MVP, went 7-for-16 from the floor and 13-for-18 at the foul line. It was an important turnaround for Milwaukee after he had 22

points on 7-for-21 shooting in Game 1 on Sunday.

Middleton finished with 28 points. Bledsoe, who was held to six points in the series opener, finished with 21 points and five assists.

The Bucks led by as many as 31 points after a closely played opening half. Game 3 of the Eastern Conference semifinal series is Friday night in Boston.

“I think that’s more what we’re accustomed to seeing,” Bucks coach Mike Budenholzer said. “I liked our spirit, our activity, our competitiveness all up and down the roster. Giannis and Khris and Bled really set a tone.

“We need to capture that, take it to Boston with us and play that way up there.”

Marcus Morris paced Boston with 17 points. Jaylen Brown

had 16, and Al Horford finished with 15.

Kyrie Irving, who had 26 points and 11 assists in the Celtics’ 112-90 victory in Game 1, had nine points on 4-for-18 shooting.

“We weren’t very good on either end,” coach Brad Stevens said.

Milwaukee broke it open by outscoring Boston 39-18 in the third quarter. Antetokounmpo scored 15 points in the period, including a three-pointer over Horford to give the Bucks an 81-71 lead with 5:33 left.

Antetokounmpo tipped in his own miss and made another three to help Milwaukee pull away. The Bucks went on a 24-2 run to carry a 98-73 lead into the fourth.

“I think in Game 1 I didn’t do a good job finding my teammates,” Antetokounmpo said.

“So of course I wanted to be aggressive, but then you’ve got to make the right plays. At the start of the game tonight, the right play was the pass.”

Irving credited the Bucks’ defensive plan.

“They did a great job of switching tonight and forcing me left,” Irving said. “I started the game off well getting downhill and setting an example for my teammates of how we want to play. I just didn’t put my stamp on that.”

Brook Lopez and George Hill each finished with 10 points for Milwaukee, which went 20-for-47 from beyond the arc. Pat Connaughton grabbed 11 rebounds to help the Bucks to a 54-45 advantage on the glass.

Milwaukee switched on screens more often than usual and held Boston to 39.5% shooting (34-for-86).

Couture's hat trick lifts Sharks over Avs

Associated Press

DENVER — San Jose center Gustav Nyquist had a couple of special deliveries this week.

On Monday, his wife gave birth to their first child. He rejoined the team Tuesday and assisted on Logan Couture recording his first career playoff hat trick.

“Perfect timing,” the beaming new father said.

Couture scored three times, including the go-ahead goal with 7:10 remaining, and the Sharks beat the Colorado Avalanche 4-2 to take a 2-1 lead in their Western Conference semifinal series.

Nyquist flew to Detroit to welcome his daughter, Charlotte, into the world. He returned to the team hours before the game and had two assists.

“It’s been an emotional few days but an unbelievable feeling,” Nyquist said.

Couture scored the winner when he sent a shot over the shoulder of Avalanche goaltender

Philipp Grubauer. His goal was just 65 seconds after Matt Nieto tied the score. Couture sealed it on an empty-net goal with 29.5 seconds remaining. Timo Meier also scored for the Sharks, who improved to 24-16 all-time in Game 3 of a series.

Game 4 is Thursday in Denver.

Martin Jones stopped 25 shots.

Nathan MacKinnon also scored to help the Avalanche rebound from a 2-0 first-period deficit. Grubauer made 27 saves for Colorado, which snapped an eight-game home winning streak.

“We worked hard. Maybe the bounces just weren’t there,” Avalanche captain Gabriel Landeskog said. “In the playoffs you work for your bounces. You create your own luck and create your own chances.”

The Avalanche went on the power play with 2:56 left when Couture was called for tripping. Colorado pulled Grubauer

for an extra skater, but couldn’t take advantage. Couture’s empty-net goal netted him the sixth playoff hat trick in Sharks franchise history and first since Devin Setoguchi during Game 3 of the 2011 Western Conference semifinals.

“I’d like to lie and say it doesn’t mean something,” Couture said. “But it was special.”

Nieto tied the score when Samuel Girard sent a shot at him. Nieto managed to tip it in while jumping in the air. As the crowd was still buzzing, Couture made a nifty move to score and silence the building. Couture has a playoff-leading nine goals.

“We haven’t won. So I don’t care what my numbers get to be,” Couture said. “I could go this whole playoffs and have zero points and if we win the Stanley Cup I’ll be the happiest guy in this room.”

Another thing that would bring a smile to his face? The return of captain Joe Pavelski, who didn’t travel with the team

after being hurt in the Vegas series.

“He’s our leader. We miss him right now,” Couture said. “We definitely miss him at times in the game. You’re looking around and hoping he’s here. We’re hoping to play as long as we can so he can come back and play with us.”

Down 2-0, Grubauer kept the Avalanche within reach during the second period. He had a shot by Marc-Edouard Vlasic bounce off his glove and clang off the crossbar. Grubauer later stopped Evander Kane on a breakaway that energized the crowd.

Late in the period and with San Jose on the power play, Brent Burns tried to send a pass up the ice, only to have it intercepted near center ice by defenseman Ian Cole. He dished it over to the speedy MacKinnon, who raced into the zone and beat Jones with a wrist shot.

Bobrovsky, Blue Jackets manage to hold Bruins at bay

Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — With Columbus holding on to a two-goal lead late in the second period, Boston’s Brad Marchand snapped a shot from the top of the left circle. The puck rebounded and trickled dangerously in the blue paint before Sergei Bobrovsky stretched out and swept it away with his glove.

Another big save for Bobrovsky, who has made a bunch of them in what has been an outstanding postseason so far. He finished with 36 stops in the 2-1 win over Boston on Tuesday night that gave the Blue Jackets a 2-1 series lead in the Eastern Conference semifinals.

Boone Jenner and Matt Duchene scored for the Blue Jackets, who won a second-round home game for first time in franchise history.

Game 4 is Thursday night.

Tuukka Rask had 32 saves for Boston. The Bruins’ only

goal was a fluke one in the last minute of the second period, the only chink in an otherwise brilliant game by Bobrovsky.

The Russian stopper withstood a flurry by Boston earlier in the second period, including the acrobatic save of the kind that has become almost routine for him in these playoffs. The Bruins pulled Rask with 2:11 left but couldn’t beat Bobrovsky with the 6-on-5 advantage.

“I thought we stayed together in the third period,” Bobrovsky said. “Obviously they had a good push, we stood together, we worked for each other and we got rewarded.”

Boston defenseman Brandon Carlo predicted that the former Vezina Trophy winner won’t be able to keep it up.

“The secondary saves that he’s making are very impressive, but he’s going to crack at some point,” Carlo said. “I have a lot of faith that we’re going to put pucks past him pretty soon.

Credit to him today, but overall I don’t think it’s going to last.”

Columbus overcame deficits twice to win Game 2 in overtime at Boston on Saturday but never trailed in Game 3. There were some big hits but the game was less testy than the previous two meetings between the two teams in the postseason.

The Blue Jackets struck late in the first period when Jenner, skating left to right across the slot, slid the puck past Rask on the glove side before the goalie could adjust. The tally with 1:23 left was Jenner’s first of the postseason.

With Zdeno Chara in the penalty box for high-sticking Jenner in the face, the Blue Jackets swarmed for an extended time in front of the Boston net before Duchene tapped in another goal with 7:18 left in the second.

Boston made it a one-goal game with 40 seconds left in the middle period when in a knot of players in front the Co-

lumbus net, the puck trickled behind Bobrovsky and over the line. The goal initially was waved off by an official, but a video review determined that play hadn’t stopped before the puck slid in. Jake DeBrusk got credit for the goal.

That was it for the Bruins.

Their best opportunity to tie the score came with just under 9 minutes left when David Savard went to the penalty box for tripping, but 16 seconds later Patrice Bergeron was whistled for the same infraction, creating a 4-on-4 and then a brief Columbus advantage.

“I still think we had enough good looks to win the game,” Boston coach Bruce Cassidy said. “We hit two posts and a crossbar. (Bobrovsky) stopped a lot of other good ones. Clearly we’d love to get into the slot a little more.”

All three of the games in the series have been decided by one goal.