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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Russia-Iran cooperation in Syria sends message to US

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Russia's use of an Iranian air base to bomb targets in Syria sends a message to Washington as it weighs a military partnership with Moscow: Join us or we'll look to your enemies.

Tuesday's missions were unprecedented. Iran allowed Russian warplanes to take off from its territory to strike opposition targets in Syria. The move came with little notice to the United States, which has watched helplessly the escalating bloodshed near Aleppo, the country's biggest city, and even offered an alliance with Russia against the Islamic State group and other extremist fighters as a way to get Syria's government out of the fight.

The negotiations have dragged on for weeks. Russia has grown impatient, with top officials several times suggesting an imminent deal, only to have American officials counter

that the sides weren't close. The bombing runs from a base near the Iranian city of Hamedan, 175 miles southwest of Tehran, may have been a reminder to the Obama administration that Moscow could be cozying up to Iran if Washington doesn't come around.

"The Russians are showing they have options in Syria while they have Washington over a barrel on Aleppo," said Andrew Tabler, a Syria expert at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. He said the operations also cement Russia's alliance with Iran in the region.

Russia and Iran have strongly backed Syrian President Bashar Assad's government throughout the five-and-a-half year civil war with rebel groups supported by the United States and allies such as Turkey and Saudi Arabia.

But the West has been pinning its hopes on Moscow.

When Russia intervened mil-

itarily in Syria last August, it claimed privately that its action would ultimately sideline Iran and its proxy Hezbollah force in Syria, making Assad more conciliatory in a peace process, according to U.S. and European diplomats.

The argument was one of several by Russia that the U.S. and others have clung to as a potential pathway to peace, and which they hope to test when the U.N. sets up a new round of peace talks in coming weeks, even if they accuse Russia of failing countless previous challenges by persisting in bombing Assad's more moderate opponents.

Secretary of State John Kerry called Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov on Tuesday to discuss the operations. Underscoring the U.S. confusion, State Department spokesman Mark Toner told reporters that Washington was "still trying to assess what exactly they're doing."

Trump changes staff in shake-up

Associated Press

TETERBORO, N.J. — Republican Donald Trump announced a shake up of his campaign leadership Wednesday, the latest sign of tumult in his bid for the White House as his poll numbers slip and only 82 days remain before the election.

The real estate mogul named Stephen Bannon, of the conservative Breitbart News website, as chief executive officer and promoted pollster Kellyanne Conway to campaign manager. Paul Manafort, Trump's controversial campaign chairman, will retain his title, but it is unclear if his role will change.

In tapping Bannon for a top campaign role, Trump is doubling down on his outsider appeal rather than appeasing more traditional Republicans.

The conservative Breitbart figure has been a cheerleader for Trump's campaign for months and was critical of Republican leaders, including House Speaker Paul Ryan.

Bannon is a former Goldman Sachs banker and does not bring presidential campaign experience to Trump's White House bid.

Thousands of homes damaged in La. flooding

Associated Press

ALBANY, La. — The smell of muddy water hung heavy in the air as people began sorting through waterlogged belongings and ripping out carpets Wednesday in flood-wracked southern Louisiana, which now faces a long-term challenge of how to house thousands of displaced people.

Even as the water receded in some areas, it was rising in other communities downstream, sending people fleeing to shelters.

Officials painted a stark pic-

ture of the crisis: at least 40,000 homes damaged and 11 people killed in some of the worst flooding in Louisiana history. More than 30,000 people have been rescued since Friday.

Amid scattered reports of looting, Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards said parishes with widespread damage were being placed under curfew as of Tuesday night.

Receding floodwaters left behind an atmosphere of determination to recover mixed with disbelief and uncertainty. Residents and business owners in the town of Albany repeatedly

noted that the area had never flooded before — and flood insurance wasn't required.

About 60,000 people have signed up for assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and 20 parishes were included in the federal disaster declaration.

And help was coming from quarters beyond the federal government.

Performer Taylor Swift told The Associated Press she is donating \$1 million to flood relief. Entertainer Lady Gaga also said she is donating an unspecified amount to flood relief efforts.

AF commits to KC-46 tanker

The Oklahoman, Oklahoma City

After months of delays and setbacks, the U.S. Air Force's newest tanker jet was cleared for production last week, officials announced.

Once complete, the KC-46 is expected to have a sizable presence in Oklahoma: Altus Air Force Base will serve as a training site for crews, while Tinker Air Force Base will provide maintenance once the plane is operational.

Tinker also is one of four bases Air Force officials are considering as possible homes for an operational KC-46 unit. Officials have designated North Carolina's Seymour Johnson Air Force Base as the preferred

site, with Tinker as a backup alternative.

Designed to replace the Cold War-era KC-135 Stratotanker, the KC-46 has been plagued by design problems, including wiring design issues and problems with the plane's aerial refueling system.

Boeing, the aircraft's manufacturer, originally was scheduled to deliver the first 18 planes to the Air Force by August 2017. Air Force officials now say they expect the first batch of planes to be delivered to Altus and McConnell Air Force Base in Kansas in early 2018.

The KC-46, which is a militarized version of the Boeing 767, features a multipoint refueling

system that will allow it to refuel two smaller planes at once.

The plane's cargo deck also includes space for three times as much cargo and twice as many passengers as the KC-135.

In clearing the KC-46 for production, the Air Force committed to buying the aircraft.

Before Air Force officials cleared the tanker for production, Boeing had to demonstrate the tanker could refuel an F-16 Fighting Falcon, C-17 Globemaster III, an A-10 Thunderbolt II, an AV-8 Harrier II and an F/A-18 Hornet.

The tanker also had to demonstrate that it could receive fuel from a KC-10 Extender.

Marine is accused of throwing glass at a bartender

By MATTHEW M. BURKE
AND CHIYOMI SUMIDA

Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — A Marine accused of throwing a glass and injuring an Okinawan bartender was released Tuesday but will likely face charges at a later date, police said.

Cpl. James Louis Mackey, assigned to Marine Corps Air Station Futenma, is expected to be charged with inflicting bodily injury in Sunday's incident at a Chatan bar, said an Okinawa prefectural police spokesman. The case has been referred to the Naha District Public Prosecutor's Office.

The incident happened around 10 p.m. when Mackey threw a glass at the head of the 26-year-old male employee, police said. The bartender suffered minor bruises.

Mackey said he did not remember what he had done because he was too drunk, said police who declined to name the bar where the incident occurred.

Marine officials said they are cooperating fully with Okinawan police in the investigation.

The incident comes at a delicate time between the U.S. military, their Tokyo allies and the Okinawan people, who are increasingly resentful over what they see as the disproportionate number of U.S. troops here, compared with the rest of Japan, and a sense of abandonment and betrayal by the central government even after it regained control of the island in 1972.

A recent rash of crimes, including the slaying of a 20-year-old woman linked to a U.S. civilian base worker, led to protest rallies. The rape of a Japanese woman by a Navy sailor and a wrong-way crash by another sailor led to tightened alcohol and liberty restrictions for U.S. troops.

Munich Oktoberfest security plan tight after recent attacks

Stars and Stripes

Security measures at this year's Oktoberfest in Munich will be tightened considerably because of fears of possible terrorist attacks, authorities said Wednesday.

The festival grounds will be cordoned off by a fence during the event, which runs from Sept. 17 to Oct. 3. Backpacks and all large bags will be banned, and small bags will be individually checked by security staff, the city of Munich said in a news release.

Oktoberfest this year comes

at a particularly sensitive time in Europe.

Germany has been on edge since a string of recent attacks, including a shooting by a German-Iranian youth in Munich that claimed 10 lives, an ax rampage near Wuerzburg that wounded five, and a suicide bombing that injured 15 outside a bar in Ansbach.

The federal government last week proposed a set of tough new security measures designed to deal with Islamic extremists. These would allow for fast-track deportations of foreigners considered dangerous

and the stripping of citizenship from anyone who joins radical groups in the Middle East.

Oktoberfest organizers will provide facilities where people will be able check their belongings, city officials said. Strollers, spray cans and glass bottles also will not be allowed onto the festival grounds, but exceptions will be made for handicapped people.

"With the revised scheme, we are drawing the lessons from the latest events without changing the character of the Oktoberfest," Munich Mayor Josef Schmidt said.

USS Detroit commissioning set

DETROIT — Plans are set for a commissioning ceremony for a U.S. Navy warship named after Michigan's largest city.

The USS Detroit Commissioning Committee says Oct. 22 is confirmed as the date for the

ceremony. The ship is scheduled to arrive in Detroit on Oct. 14 and tours, VIP visits, celebrations and other events are planned in the week leading up to the ceremony.

After its commissioning, the ship will cross the Detroit River on Oct. 24 to spend four days in Windsor, Ontario.

The Freedom-class littoral

combat ship was christened in 2014 on the Menominee River at the Marinette Marine Corp. shipyard in Marinette, Wis.

Lockheed Martin says the ship is capable of speeds in excess of 40 knots and can operate in water less than 20 feet deep.

From The Associated Press

Utley helps Dodgers blast former team

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Chase Utley added another memorable moment to his career in Philadelphia — almost a year after he last wore a Phillies uniform.

Utley got curtain calls after each of his two home runs — including a grand slam — in his first game at Citizens Bank Park since being traded to the Los Angeles Dodgers last Aug. 19. Those cheers came after fans greeted him with a 1½-minute ovation before he struck out leading off the Dodgers' 15-5 rout of the Phillies on Tuesday night.

Utley was a six-time All-Star in 13 seasons as Philadelphia's second baseman, helping the team win five straight NL East titles and the 2008 World Series. Fans showed their appreciation with four standing ovations.

In the fifth, Utley hit a two-out solo homer off Vince Velasquez (8-5) and raced around the bases in customary fashion. Fans clamored for a rare curtain call by a visiting player, and Utley obliged to another standing ovation.

In the seventh, Utley hit a grand slam off Michael Mariot, and fans again cheered him

back out of the dugout. It was Utley's seventh career grand slam. His first career hit was a slam at Veterans Stadium.

Blue Jays 12, Yankees 6: Russell Martin homered twice, including a go-ahead shot in an eight-run eighth inning, and Troy Tulowitzki had four hits as Toronto erased a six-run deficit to beat host New York.

Edwin Encarnacion hit a tying homer and drove home three runs in the eighth as Toronto took advantage of a complete meltdown by New York's bullpen.

Red Sox 5, Orioles 3: Mookie Betts homered twice and drove in five runs, helping resurgent Boston beat host Baltimore for its fifth straight victory.

The victory lifted Boston into a tie with Baltimore for second place in the AL East, one game behind Toronto.

Pirates 4, Giants 3: Jung Ho Kang hit a tiebreaking home run in the eighth inning and Pittsburgh knocked host San Francisco out of first place in the NL West.

Rangers 5, Athletics 4 (10): Rougned Odor was hit by a pitch with the bases loaded in the 10th inning, forcing home the winning run for AL-leading

host Texas.

Rockies 6, Nationals 2: DJ LeMahieu had three hits and reached base for the ninth straight plate appearance and host Colorado's bullpen threw six scoreless innings following a lengthy weather delay.

Rain and lightning swept over Coors Field at the start of the fourth, and the game didn't resume until 9:52 p.m. after a delay of 2 hours, 5 minutes.

Indians 3, White Sox 1: Corey Kluber allowed one run in six innings to win his fourth consecutive start, and host Cleveland beat Chicago for the seventh straight time.

Cubs 4-4, Brewers 0-1: Jason Hammel threw seven innings of two-hit ball, Anthony Rizzo jumped onto a wall to make a remarkable catch of a foul ball and host Chicago beat banged-up Milwaukee to sweep a day-night doubleheader.

In the opener, Trevor Cahill (2-3) came off the disabled list to throw five innings of two-hit ball in his first start in nearly 16 months.

Cardinals 8, Astros 5: Tommy Pham and Jedd Gyorko each homered to help visiting St. Louis beat Houston.

Royals 6, Tigers 1: Danny

Duffy allowed one run in 7²/₃ innings and visiting Kansas City hit four homers in beating Detroit.

Mets 7, Diamondbacks 5: Noah Syndergaard earned his first victory in seven starts, helping himself with a two-run homer, and visiting New York ended a string of four consecutive losses to Arizona in the past week.

Jeury's Familia pitched a perfect ninth for his major league-leading 40th save.

Angels 7, Mariners 6: Cliff Pennington hit a go-ahead triple in the eighth inning, Albert Pujols slugged his 22nd home run and host Los Angeles ended an 11-game losing streak.

Reds 6, Marlins 3: Tucker Barnhart's first career grand slam capped host Cincinnati's five-run first inning, giving Anthony DeSclafani all the support he needed to beat his former team.

Rays 15, Padres 1: Brad Miller hit two of Tampa Bay's five home runs in a rout of visiting San Diego.

Twins 4, Braves 2: Ervin Santana scattered four hits over seven scoreless innings, Joe Mauer homered and Minnesota beat host Atlanta.

Cards coach Arians hospitalized with stomach pain

Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — Arizona Cardinals coach Bruce Arians was hospitalized after complaining of stomach pain.

Cardinals spokesman Mark Dalton said that after arriving for the team's joint practice with the Chargers at Qualcomm Stadium on Tuesday night, Arians told his medical staff he was not feeling well and had stomach pain.

Dalton said later that Arians had undergone tests and would remain hospitalized overnight.

The 63-year-old Arians, a two-time NFL Coach of the Year, is in his fourth season in Arizona. He led the Cardinals to a 13-3 record and a playoff victory over Green Bay last season before a blowout loss at Carolina in the NFC championship game.

Dalton said Arians, one of the

big personalities in the league as shown on Amazon.com's "All or Nothing" series, was evaluated by medical personnel at the stadium and taken to the hospital for further evaluation.

The practice went on without the coach.

"I was like, 'where is he?' Cardinals tackle D.J. Humphries said. "Then they brought us all up and they told us. I hope he is OK. They said he is fine and

he is just in the hospital getting everything all done.

"B.A. is a big deal in my life. He's helped me out a lot through the whole process and I just want to make sure he is all right. And from what they told us, he is.

"I definitely missed him. He wasn't here to cuss people out when they mess up every now and then. That was what I was listening for."



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Walsh Jennings' quest for 4th gold ends

Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO — If Kerri Walsh Jennings winds up with a fourth medal in Olympic beach volleyball, it will be bronze — not gold, like the other three she has earned in what had been an unblemished record at the Summer Games.

Walsh Jennings and partner April Ross were relegated to the third-place game by Brazil's reigning world champions, who beat the Americans in straight sets on Tuesday night to advance to a gold medal matchup with Germany.

"We could squash that team, and I say that with all the respect in the world," Walsh Jennings said. "But they outplayed us in every way."

Agatha and Barbara rode a boisterous crowd at the Copacabana venue to a 22-20, 21-18

victory, keeping alive the host nation's chances for a gold medal after their top-seeded team lost to Germany earlier in the day.

It was the first loss in an Olympic beach volleyball career that claimed gold medals in Athens, Beijing and London with partner Misty May-Treanor.

"It's a terrible feeling," she said, taking the blame for the loss by saying her failure to pass effectively put her partner in a bind.

"I don't agree with that," Ross said.

"The roles have been reversed before; I could have done a lot more. We're a team," she said, starting a thought but never finishing it before repeating, "We're a team."

Asked if she can come back for another try at a gold medal,

Walsh Jennings said, "I know I can. I just don't know if I want to."

Walsh Jennings said they would be proud to stand on the podium, and their focus now was to recover from the emotional loss with less than 21 hours before the third-place match against Larissa and Talita, a pair of three-time Olympians.

"It's a huge deal," said Ross, who won the silver medal in London.

Brazilian men's team Alison and Bruno also advanced to the gold medal game by beating the Netherlands earlier in the day. Italy defeated Russia in the other men's semifinal to clinch its first Olympic beach volleyball medal.

The men's final is Thursday. Laura Ludwig and Kira

Walkenhorst clinched Germany's first Olympic medal in women's beach volleyball by topping Larissa and Talita, 21-18, 21-12.

"I think it will take some time to realize what we did here," Ludwig said. "We had some tough times, and now we're in the final!"

The German men won the gold medal in London. But to match the feat in Rio, the women will have to beat the defending world champions.

Brazil still has a chance to match its 2004 Olympic haul of three medals. Despite failing to make the final, Talita said she would never forget playing in front of the hometown crowd on the iconic beach.

"I am so proud of my people, the Brazilian people," Talita said.

US women reach semis with rout of Japan

Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO — Diana Taurasi and the U.S. women's basketball brushed aside yet another opponent at the Rio Games after being challenged for the first time in the Olympics, albeit for just one half.

While Japan played the Americans tough in the first half, the end result was another blowout victory for the U.S., although the 110-64 dismantling of the Japanese team may have come at a cost.

Point guard Sue Bird didn't play the second half after injuring her right knee in the second quarter.

The Americans will meet France in the semifinals Thursday.

In the first 20 minutes against Japan, the Americans were challenged as the Asian nation wasn't afraid to try and run with them. The Japanese quickly got the ball up and down the court and hit open jumpers, taking it right at the No. 1 ranked team in the world.

While this game provided the first real test for the Ameri-

cans, their road to a sixth consecutive gold medal got a little bit easier when Australia lost to Serbia 73-71 early Tuesday. The Aussies had been the only team to hold a halftime lead over the U.S. at the Olympics in the past 16 years when they led by four in the semifinal game in the 2012 London Games. The U.S. won that game by 13. Serbia plays Spain in Thursday's other semifinal.

Gymnastics: Simone Biles put the finishing touches on one of the greatest Olympics by a gymnast, capturing her fourth gold of the games with an electric performance in the floor exercise on Tuesday.

The 19-year-old American completed an extraordinary stretch that included a team gold for the "Final Five" as well as individual golds in the all-around and vault and bronze on balance beam. Her five medals tie the most for an American female gymnast in a single Olympics and her four golds tie an Olympic record shared by four others.

Teammate Aly Raisman

claimed her third medal during Rio and sixth overall in her Olympic career.

American Danell Leyva matched Biles and Raisman with a pair of medals of his own, taking silver on both the parallel bars and high bar. The triumph also served as a bit of redemption for Leyva, a bronze medalist in the all-around four years ago but who has struggled with his form recently.

Women's 1,500 meters: As Jenny Simpson took an extra lap around the blue track Tuesday night, Stars and Stripes in tow, and celebrated becoming the first U.S. woman to medal in the Olympic 1,500 meters, she thought back to a moment of disappointment.

At the 2015 world championships in Beijing, Simpson lost a shoe after getting stepped on and was forced to complete her event with her left foot bare. She ended up 11th, a far cry from her 2011 world title and 2013 runner-up finish.

Now she has her Olympic bronze, finishing third at Olympic Stadium in 4 minutes,

10.53 seconds, behind Faith Kipyegon of Kenya and world-record holder Genzebe Dibaba of Ethiopia.

Volleyball: Faces buried in hands and tears falling, the Brazilian women's volleyball team lost to China in a five-set quarterfinal match on Tuesday.

It was another heartbreaking defeat for the home country only hours after the Brazilian women's soccer team fell in a penalty shootout to Sweden.

China rallied from losing the first set to stun the two time-defending champion Brazilians 15-13 in the decisive fifth.

Karch Kiraly's top-ranked Americans defeated familiar opponent Japan in straight sets to reach the semifinals.

The unbeaten U.S. (6-0) won 25-16, 25-23, 25-22 and has dropped just five sets all tournament. The Americans will face Serbia, a straight-set winner over Russia, in Thursday's semifinals.

China will face the upstart Netherlands women, who beat South Korea in four sets.