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Trump: US 'locked and loaded' over N. Korea

Associated Press

BEDMINSTER, N.J. — President Donald Trump on Friday again delivered a bold warning to North Korea, tweeting that the U.S. military is “locked and loaded” if the isolated rogue nation acts “unwisely,” escalating an exchange of threats between the nuclear-armed nations.

American and South Korean officials said they would move forward this month with large-scale military exercises that North Korea claims are a rehearsal for war. Pyongyang has laid out plans to strike near the U.S. territory of Guam.

Trump tweeted Friday: “Military solutions are now fully in place, locked and loaded, should North Korea act unwisely. Hopefully Kim Jong Un will find another path!”

His provocative public declarations, a break from the careful language of his predecessors, have only grown louder as the week has gone on.

They included the president musing that his initial warning of delivering “fire and fury” to North Korea was too timid. The days of war rhetoric have alarmed international leaders.

“I don’t see a military solution and I don’t think it’s called for,” said German Chancellor Angela Merkel. She declined to say whether Germany would stand with the U.S. in case of a military conflict with North Korea and called on the U.N. Security Council to continue to address the issue.

“I think escalating the rhetoric is the wrong answer,” Merkel added.

Russia’s foreign minister, Sergey Lavrov, estimated the risk of a military conflict between the U.S. and North Korea as “very high,” and said Moscow was deeply concerned.

“When you get close to the point of a fight, the one who is stronger and wiser should be the first to step back from the brink,” Lavrov said Friday.

Two days after North Korea laid out its plans to strike near Guam with unsettling specificity, there was no observable march toward combat. U.S. officials said there was no major movement of U.S. military assets to the region, nor were there signs Pyongyang was actively preparing for war.

As it is, the U.S. has a robust military presence in the region, including six B-1 bombers on Guam and Air Force fighter

Beyond bluster, foes in contact

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Beyond the bluster, the Trump administration has been quietly engaged in back-channel diplomacy with North Korea for several months, addressing Americans imprisoned in the communist country and deteriorating relations between the longtime foes, The Associated Press has learned.

It had been known the two sides had discussions to secure the June release of an American university student. But it wasn’t known until now that the contacts have continued, or that they have broached matters other than U.S. detainees.

People familiar with the contacts say the interactions have done nothing thus far to quell tensions over North Korea’s nuclear weapons and missile advances, which are now fueling fears of military confrontation. But they say the behind-the-scenes discussions still could be a foundation for more serious negotiation, including on North Korea’s nuclear weapons, should President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un put aside the bellicose rhetoric of recent days and endorse a dialogue.

The contacts are occurring regularly between Joseph Yun, the U.S. envoy for North Korea policy, and Pak Song Il, a senior North Korean diplomat at the country’s U.N. mission, according to U.S. officials and others briefed on the process. They weren’t authorized to discuss the confidential exchanges and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Officials call it the “New York chan-

nel.” Yun is the only U.S. diplomat in contact with any North Korean counterpart. The communications largely serve as a way to exchange messages, allowing Washington and Pyongyang to relay information.

Drowned out by the furor over Trump’s warning to North Korea of “fire and fury like the world has never seen,” Secretary of State Rex Tillerson has expressed a willingness to entertain negotiations. His condition: Pyongyang must stop tests of missiles that can now potentially reach the U.S. mainland.

Tillerson has even hinted at an ongoing back channel. “We have other means of communication open to them, to certainly hear from them if they have a desire to want to talk,” he said at an Asian security meeting in the Philippines this week.

The interactions could point to a level of pragmatism in the Trump administration’s approach to the North Korean threat, despite the president’s dire warnings.

On Friday, he tweeted: “Military solutions are now fully in place, locked and loaded, should North Korea act unwisely.” But on Thursday, he said, “we’ll always consider negotiations,” even if they haven’t worked in the last quarter-century.

The contacts suggest Pyongyang, too, may be open to a negotiation even as it talks of launching missiles near the U.S. territory of Guam. The North regularly threatens nuclear strikes on the U.S. and its allies.

jet units in South Korea, plus other assets across the Pacific Ocean and in the skies above. U.S. military options range from nothing to a full-on conventional assault by air, sea and ground forces. Any order by the president could be executed quickly.

The U.S.-South Korea exercises are an annual event, but they come as Pyongyang says it is readying a plan to fire off four Hwasong-12 missiles toward the tiny island, which is U.S. territory and a major

military hub. The plan would be sent to Kim for approval just before or as the U.S.-South Korea drills begin.

Called Ulchi-Freedom Guardian, the exercises are expected to run Aug. 21-31 and to involve tens of thousands of American and South Korean troops on the ground and in the sea and air. Washington and Seoul say the exercises are defensive in nature and are crucial to maintaining a deterrent against North Korean aggression.

US-backed Syrian fighters up pressure on ISIS in Raqqa

Associated Press

BEIRUT — U.S.-backed Syrian fighters advancing on Islamic State militants from the eastern and western parts of the northern city of Raqqa have linked up for the first time since launching their offensive on ISIS' de facto capital, officials said Friday.

The Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces launched a wide offensive to capture Raqqa on June 6.

So far the Western-backed fighters, under the cover of U.S.-backed coalition airstrikes, have captured half the city and linking up forces from the eastern and western fronts would be a major milestone in the battle for Raqqa. The linkup of the eastern and western fronts deprives ISIS of access to the Euphrates River — and effectively leaves the remaining militants in Raqqa and thousands of civilians surrounded.

U.S. Army Col. Ryan Dillon tweeted that SDF forces have linked up “East-West axes” in Raqqa and are continuing to pressure ISIS.

“The fighting is ongoing from room to room and from house to house,” said Mustafa Bali, head of the SDF media center. Bali also confirmed that SDF fighters pushing from opposite sides of the city have met up.

Bali said by telephone from northern Syria that the key difficulty facing advancing SDF fighters is to avoid striking civilians used by ISIS as human shields.

Meanwhile, the U.N. migration agency said Friday that more than 600,000 displaced Syrians have returned to their homes this year, citing an increasing trend of returns while warning the situation remains “not sustainable.”

A third of the returnees said they went back to “protect their assets” while one-quarter cited “improved economic conditions,” the International Organization for Migration said.

USMC replaces mentoring effort with tailored guidance

BY MARTIN EGNASH
Stars and Stripes

GRAFENWOEHR, Germany — New guidelines for Marine leadership emphasize coaching and constant interaction between subordinates and leaders, a Marine official said Wednesday.

The new Marine Leader Development guideline issued recently by Marine Corps Commandant Gen. Robert Neller replaces the Marine Corps Mentoring Program, which had been in place since 2006. The mentoring program was criticized for being overly formal and for a one-size-fits-all approach to mentoring.

The guideline outlines priorities such as family, fitness and

finances but does not prescribe exactly what to say or do regarding each topic. This allows leaders to tailor the way they mentor Marines to suit the situation.

“Removing the prescriptiveness of (MCMP) is a win,” said Capt. George Chronis, commanding officer of Headquarters Company of Marine Corps Forces Europe and Africa. “Anytime you create a new box that must be checked, you immediately infuse it with a certain amount of sterility.”

Marine Corps training has come under scrutiny since the April court-martial of a drill instructor in connection with the death of a Muslim Marine recruit. Raheel Siddiqui died during recruit training at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Is-

land, S.C., in March 2016. Critics have said the death stemmed from a deep problem within the Marine Corps culture.

The Marine Corps' Lejeune Leadership Institute describes the new guidance as a comprehensive approach that seeks to foster development of all aspects of Marines' personal and professional lives. The institute says it is neither a philosophy nor a program; it is a framework to be used at all levels.

The old mentoring program was noted for assigning mentors and mentees for each Marine based on rank. The new guideline says commands should identify subject-matter experts in their units, regardless of rank, to mentor Marines based on their specialties.

Paralyzed vets group: Ending VA medical testing on dogs could limit vital research

BY NIKKI WENTLING
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Advocates and lawmakers attempting to shut down dog testing at the Department of Veterans Affairs have a new adversary — a group of disabled veterans concerned that stopping the research would limit future medical advancements.

A measure to stop funding for VA research that causes pain to dogs passed the House floor on July 26 as part of a multi-agency funding bill. It was supported by Republicans and Democrats and drew no opponents on the House floor.

This week, though, Paralyzed Veterans of America, a veterans service organization, spoke out against it.

“We have an investment in research, period,” said PVA Executive Director Sherman Gillums. “There were so

many benefits to research that weren't considered when this bill was put out.”

In most instances of animal research, the VA uses mice or rats, Michael Fallon, the VA chief veterinary medical officer, said in a written statement. Dogs are used in some cases because of their physiological similarities to humans.

Dog testing helped the VA develop the cardiac pacemaker, a VA spokesman said. VA researchers are now using dogs to better understand heart conditions, study how to prevent fatal lung infections and develop glucose sensors for diabetics.

“VA's animal research program has saved lives in the past and will save lives in the future,” Fallon said. “It's important for people to recognize that canine research is essential to developing crucial medical advancements.”

Gillums said he was frustrat-

ed that the potential medical benefits for veterans weren't raised in debate on the measure. He wrote, in a column that was published this week in *The Hill*, that he represents “tens of thousands” of veterans with specialized needs who could benefit from advancements made through animal testing.

“We are the stakeholders,” Gillums said. “The catastrophically disabled veteran population, I think, might give balance to this discussion that they had without us in the room.”

The animal rights group White Coat Waste Project has been advocating since early this year for the legislation, which also has support of the Humane Society of the United States. White Coat Waste Project was founded by a former Republican strategist and frames animal rights as a conservative issue by linking it to the waste of taxpayer dollars.

Court upholds Seattle gun tax

Associated Press

SEATTLE — The Washington Supreme Court upheld Seattle's "gun violence tax" against a challenge from gun rights groups Thursday, leaving the city as one of the few places in the country that tax the sale of firearms and ammunition to raise money for gun-violence research.

In an 8-1 decision, the justices ruled that the levy fell within the city's taxing authority, and its primary purpose was to raise revenue for "the public benefit."

The tax, which took effect in 2016, adds \$25 to the price of each firearm sold in the city plus 2 cents or 5 cents per round of ammunition, depending on the type. It raised less than \$200,000 in its first year, with the money earmarked for gun-violence research. One gun shop cited the tax in moving out of the city.

Cook County, Ill., which includes Chicago, is apparently the only other jurisdiction with such a measure, according to both gun rights groups and gun-control advocates.

The National Rifle Association and other gun rights groups, along with gun stores and customers, sued over Seattle's tax. They argued that the power to regulate firearms is by and large reserved to the state. Seattle's measure was viewed as a regulation designed to hinder gun sales, they argued.

In her opinion for the majority, Justice Debra Stephens wrote that state law "grants Seattle broad authority to tax retailers for the privilege of doing business within city limits."

In 2014, Seattle became the first city in the country to directly fund gun violence research, City Councilman Tim Burgess said, and the results showed that gun violence costs Seattle and King County \$180 million per year. That prompted the council to impose the tax to help defray those costs.

Officials say the direct medical costs of treating 253 gunshot victims at Harborview Medical Center in 2014 totaled more than \$17 million. Taxpayers paid more than \$12 million of that.

While it's only a tiny chunk of what gun violence costs society, the tax revenue is important in light of a congressional ban on using federal money to promote gun research, Burgess suggested.

"It's truly disappointing that the NRA and its allies always oppose these common sense steps to shine light on the gun violence epidemic," Burgess said in a written statement. "That makes today an especially huge win. I hope other cities in Washington now feel comfortable to follow suit."

Alan Gottlieb, founder of one of the groups that challenged the law, the Bellevue, Wash.-based Second Amendment Foundation, said the decision shows that "gun owners must get more involved in Supreme Court races."

New Orleans frets over floods

Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — With debris from last weekend's flash flood still piled up on sidewalks and their city under a state of emergency, New Orleans residents looked ahead warily on Friday to the prospect of more rain to tax the city's malfunctioning pump system.

Tammy Butler went through Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and was reliving the stress this week. Butler said she can't afford to rebuild her home and life a second time.

"I am angry, and I am sick of it," Butler said. "If people keep getting floods, I'm just going to have to leave the city."

The city scrambled to repair fire-damaged equipment at a power plant and shore up its drainage system less than a week after a flash flood from torrential rain overwhelmed the city's pumping system and inundated many neighborhoods.

A control panel on one of two working turbines had been fixed by Friday morning, but the system remains well below full power, Mayor Mitch Landrieu said at a morning news conference. The turbine powers some of the city's pumps.

"We remain at risk until additional turbines are back up," Landrieu said, adding that he hopes that will happen by the end of the month. Still, he said, "Panic is not where we need to be right now."

He said the latest to go offline will be powered up over 24 hours. Meanwhile, Landrieu said, 26 generators have been ordered and will remain through hurricane season.

He also said a location would be set

up Friday for residents to get sandbags should they want to take the extra precaution of sandbagging their homes.

Schools closed for the week, and the mayor urged residents to park their cars on high ground.

Gov. John Bel Edwards described his emergency declaration Thursday as a precautionary measure.

The National Weather Service forecast a 60 percent chance of rain Friday, with a chance that heavy rainfall could lead to more flooding.

The city's infrastructure had been crumbling for years before the devastation unleashed in 2005 by levee breaches in Hurricane Katrina's aftermath.

The federal government earmarked billions of dollars for repairs and upgrades after the hurricane, but the problems have persisted.

Streets are pockmarked with potholes and sinkholes. The city's water system has been plagued by leaks from broken pipes and power outages leading to boil water advisories.

New Orleans' municipal pumping system is supposed to move water out of the low-lying city. Having the system crippled in August, the middle of hurricane season, could not come at a worse time for New Orleans.

But officials feared that even a common thunderstorm would test the system's reduced capacity.

Earlier this week, city officials and spokespeople repeatedly had said that all 24 pumping stations were working at full capacity.

Trump 'thankful' Putin expelled hundreds of US diplomats

The Washington Post

BEDMINSTER, N.J. — President Donald Trump said here Thursday that he is "very thankful" to Russian President Vladimir Putin for expelling hundreds of U.S. diplomats from Russia, because he said it helps him cut the U.S. government's payroll.

Addressing for the first time Putin's demand late last month that the U.S. Embassy and consulates in Russia would have to cut 775 diplomatic and technical staffers, Trump told reporters that he sees no reason for them to continue working in Russia.

"I want to thank him because we're trying to cut down our payroll, and as

far as I'm concerned, I'm very thankful that he let go a large number of people because now we have a smaller payroll," Trump said. "There's no real reason for them to go back. I greatly appreciate the fact that we've been able to cut our payroll of the United States. We're going to save a lot of money."

Trump's answer was a tad tongue-in-cheek, but he gave no clear indication that he was joking or trying to be facetious in offering his gratitude to Putin.

Putin's order to expel U.S. diplomats was a significant escalation in tensions after the United States increased sanctions against Russia over the Kremlin's meddling in the 2016 presidential election.

Kenyans await election results

Associated Press

NAIROBI, Kenya — Kenyans on Friday awaited the official results of Tuesday's disputed election as riot police patrolled Nairobi's central business district, and opposition supporters burned tires and blocked roads in several areas.

Kenya's election commission rejected claims by opposition leader Raila Odinga that its database was hacked and results were manipulated, and that an unofficial tally confirms him as the winner. Provisional results show President Uhuru Kenyatta with a wide lead.

The commission has until Tuesday to announce the results.

The government urged citizens to return to work. Television and radio presenters echoed messages from the interior ministry saying the country was safe despite pockets of protests.

Opposition supporters burned tires and blocked roads in the Nairobi slum of Kibera and in Kisumu, a city where Odinga has strong support. At least three people have been shot and killed during clashes between police and opposition supporters this week.

The opposition, in asking for access to the commission's servers, said it will accept the results. It wants to look at server activity on election day and the following day to confirm whether the alleged hacking took place.

Poll: Most say time to stop push to repeal 'Obamacare'

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Message to President Donald Trump and congressional Republicans: It's time to make the Affordable Care Act more effective. Stop trying to scuttle it.

That's the resounding word from a national poll released Friday by the non-partisan Kaiser Family Foundation. The survey was taken following last month's Senate derailment of the GOP drive to supplant much of President Barack Obama's statute with a diminished federal role in health care.

About 4 in 5 want the Trump administration to take actions that help Obama's law function properly, rather than try to undermine it. Trump has suggested steps like halting subsidies to insurers who reduce out-of-pockets health costs for millions of consumers. His administration has discussed other moves like curbing outreach programs that persuade people to buy coverage and not enforcing the tax penalty the statute imposes on those who remain uninsured.

Just 3 in 10 want Trump and Repub-

licans to continue their drive to repeal and replace the statute. Most prefer that they instead move to shore up the law's marketplaces, which are seeing rising premiums and, in some areas, few insurers willing to sell policies.

Ominously for the GOP, 6 in 10 say Trump and congressional Republicans are responsible for any upcoming health care problems because they control government. That could be a bad sign for Republicans as they prepare to defend their House and Senate majorities in the 2018 elections.

And by nearly 2-to-1, most say it's good that the Senate rejected the GOP repeal-and-replace bill last month.

The poll found that 52 percent have a positive view of Obama's law, a 9 percentage point increase since Trump was elected last November.

The Kaiser Health Tracking Poll was conducted Aug. 1-6 and involved random calls to the cell phones and landlines of 1,211 adults. The margin of sampling error for all respondents is plus or minus 3 percentage points.

UN: Smugglers throw migrants into sea off Yemen

Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS — Smugglers have thrown some 280 migrants into the sea off the coast of Yemen in the last two days, causing more than 50 to drown and leaving over 30 missing, the U.N. migration agency said Thursday.

U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric said the migrants who were forced from boats in two separate "deeply troubling" incidents were hoping to reach countries in the region via war-torn Yemen.

The International Organization for Migration said Wednesday that up to 50 migrants from Ethiopia and Somalia were "deliberately drowned" by a smuggler off Yemen. The U.N. agency said 160 Ethiopian migrants were violently forced into the Arabian Sea on Thursday.

The IOM said in a statement

late Thursday that its staff found six bodies on the beach — two male and four female — and 13 people are still missing. It said 84 migrants left the beach before IOM staff arrived while it provided emergency medical assistance as well as food and water to 57 surviving migrants.

Dujarric said the situation for migrants trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea and the Sahara desert are "just as heartbreaking" as the tragedy unfolding off Yemen.

He said 2,405 people have died or disappeared during their attempts to cross the Mediterranean and more than 265 people have died or were missing while traveling across the Sahara trying to reach the sea.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres "is heartbroken by this continuing tragedy,"

Dujarric said.

The narrow waters between the Horn of Africa and Yemen have been a popular migration route despite Yemen's conflict. Migrants, most of them Ethiopians, try to make their way to oil-rich Gulf countries in hopes of finding jobs.

Laurent de Boeck, the IOM's chief of mission in Yemen, told The Associated Press on Thursday that some of the migrants trying to reach Yemen "are not aware at all that there is a war. Sometimes they don't even believe us when we explain it to them."

Just by making land, they feel "they are halfway to wealthy," he said.

In the first drownings on Wednesday, a smuggler forced more than 120 migrants into the sea as they approached Yemen's coast, the IOM said. Its staffers found the shallow

graves of 29 migrants on a beach in Shabwa during a routine patrol. At least 22 migrants remained missing.

The passengers' average age was about 16, the IOM said.

"The survivors told our colleagues on the beach that the smuggler pushed them to the sea when he saw some 'authority types' near the coast," de Boeck said earlier. "They also told us that the smuggler has already returned to Somalia to ... pick up more migrants to bring to Yemen on the same route."

The IOM says about 55,000 migrants have left Horn of Africa nations for Yemen since January, most from Somalia and Ethiopia fleeing drought and unrest at home. Many leave from points in Djibouti, with some departing from Somalia. A third of them are estimated to be women.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Endangered bat causes fight over wind farm

HI HONOLULU — An endangered native bat is at the center of a fight over a wind farm proposal in Hawaii.

Honolulu News Now reported residents showed up for Monday's contested case hearing for the Na Pua Makani project in Kahuku. The developer, Na Pua Makani Power Partners, is seeking a permit that would allow the project to harm or kill certain threatened and endangered species, including 51 Hawaiian hoary bats over a 21-year period. The facility would include eight or nine wind turbines. A company spokesman said the turbine generators will be 500 to 600 feet tall.

Police seek thief who poached eggs

PA HEREFORD TOWNSHIP — Authorities are trying to crack the case of an egg thief who's been stealing from a roadside stand in Pennsylvania.

Stand owner Denise Timer said Wednesday that she set up a security camera after about 100 eggs and small amounts of cash were stolen from her property over the last month and a half.

Police have linked the thefts to a man who was caught on camera rummaging through the egg cooler the same day that a dozen eggs and \$6 in change were taken.

Timer said she now only puts out a dozen eggs at a time, but they also recently were stolen.

Intruder cleans home and takes nothing

VA ARLINGTON — A man in a Washington suburb returned home to find his apartment had been broken

into — and cleaned.

Arlington County Police said in a crime report that shortly after 12:00 a.m. Monday, a man returned to his Arlington apartment after a trip. He called police when he noticed his apartment appeared to have been cleaned and some items had been moved around. Nothing was missing.

WRC-TV reported the man told police he doesn't employ a maid. Police said the mystery cleaner unlawfully entered the apartment.

Channing Tatum dances with gas station cashier

NC STATESVILLE — Channing Tatum hosted an impromptu dance party at a North Carolina gas station.

The "Magic Mike" star stopped by the Sunoco in Statesville on Tuesday night for some coffee and a candy bar. He bantered with the cashier and later danced with her to the tune of Nas' "If I Ruled The World." Tatum joked with some puzzled customers that he was the store manager. He took time to snap a photo with a fan. The episode was streamed to Tatum's fans via Facebook Live.

Tatum is promoting his upcoming film, "Logan Lucky," which centers on a heist at a North Carolina NASCAR race.

Man tries to get bank to deposit \$1M bill

IA SIOUX CITY — Authorities said a man who tried to deposit what he presented as a \$1 million bill has been charged with drug possession in Iowa.

A criminal complaint said Sioux City police officers were called to a Northwest Bank branch Thursday to talk to a man who tried to deposit the bill into his account. The offi-

cers asked Dennis Strickland, 33, whether he had any more of the bills, and a baggie fell out when he emptied a pocket. The complaint said the baggie contained methamphetamine.

The U.S. Treasury Department said it has never produced a \$1 million bill.

Hospital worker praised for returning \$9,100

RI PROVIDENCE — A worker at a Rhode Island hospital is earning praise for what he did with money that was literally laundered.

Steven Ledo, a 19-year employee of The Miriam Hospital in Providence, was working the laundry room last month when he noticed \$50 and \$100 bills billowing out of an open dryer. He gathered up \$9,100 in all and turned it over to administrators, who made sure it was returned to a patient.

Ledo told The Providence Journal that keeping the money never crossed his mind because of the way his parents raised him.

Lack of funds may squash pumpkin fling

DE BRIDGEVILLE — Organizers said a lack of funding could soon squash an annual pumpkin-flinging event in southern Delaware.

Punkin Chunkin officials said this year's 32nd edition of the event will go on, but the organization is struggling.

The Science Channel withdrew as a main sponsor of the event after a woman was critically injured last year when she was hit by metal after an air cannon's trap door blew off.

Frank Payton, president of the World Punkin Chunkin Championship Association, said the event will return to Sussex County in November, but without more sponsors, this year's

event could be the last.

'Throwback' traffic tickets issued in city

WY CHEYENNE — Some people getting stopped for traffic violations in Wyoming's capital are receiving "throwback" warnings instead of real tickets.

The unofficial traffic warnings being issued by the Cheyenne Police Department include informing violators they might face penalties such as "leaving town by sunrise" or "donating two bits to charity." The "throwback" traffic warnings are being issued through Sunday as part of the city's 150th anniversary celebration this year.

While the slips of paper are not a ticket, department spokesman Officer Kevin Malatesta told the Wyoming Tribune Eagle it's hoped the warnings also will encourage people to drive safely.

Airplane's cabin door opens during flight

ME ROCKLAND — An airplane traveling from Maine to Boston had to make an emergency landing after one of its cabin doors opened mid-flight.

The Portland Press Herald reported nine passengers and the pilot were on board a Cape Air flight traveling from Rockland on Wednesday when the top section of the boarding door opened. Cape Air spokeswoman Michelle Haynes said air rushed into the cabin, but because the plane was flying at a low altitude, it did not become pressurized, and the passengers were not at risk.

The plane made the emergency landing at Boston's Logan International Airport. Hayes said everyone on board made it safely to their destinations.

From wire reports

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Cutler getting fresh start in Miami

Associated Press

MIAMI — Ask former teammates about Jay Cutler, and without any prompting, it comes up: The face.

No NFL quarterback in history has had his facial expressions dissected more than Cutler's. Why doesn't he smile more? Why doesn't he look more intense? Is he apathetic? Aloof? The perception of nonchalance led an NFL fan in 2012 to Photoshop a cigarette in Cutler's mouth and create the "SmokinJayCutler" Tumblr account, which went viral.

The smoking Cutler meme resurfaced Monday during his introductory news conference after signing a one-year, \$10 million contract with the Dolphins to replace injured starter Ryan Tannehill.

That face, say those who know him, is, in fact, the face of a tough-as-nails competitor, son of a no-nonsense Indiana state trooper who ran a concrete business on the side, a three-sport phenom who grew up on Holly Lane in Santa Claus, Ind., led Heritage Hills High to a state semifinal victory on a severely sprained ankle, and survived four years at Vanderbilt, where he faced relentless pressure from the Southeastern Conference's punishing defenses.

That face, they say, is a resilient guy who during the past eight years, while playing quarterback for the Chicago Bears and being a media piñata, was battling type 1 diabetes, pricking his finger several times a day, injecting himself in the stomach with insulin. He realized something was wrong when he felt weak and lost 35 pounds during the 2007 season with the Denver Broncos. He was diagnosed in April 2008, just before his 25th birthday.

"Living with diabetes in the public eye, it makes it harder," Cutler said in a video for National Diabetes Month. "There is no real room for error. Every day I have to be on. If I go out and have a bad game and my numbers are way off I'm going to get criticized for it. I can get real low and not know exactly what's going on and get hit the wrong way and hurt myself. There are definitely dangers out there."

Although he has been married to actress Kristin Cavallari since 2013 after courting her long-distance through her publicist (Cavallari sheepishly admits she had to Google Cutler because she didn't know who he was), he is uncomfortable in the spotlight. The father of three is guarded with the media, which has not helped his public image.

"Jay's been getting blasted his whole career, people saying he needs to smile more, be more emotional, Twitter blew up with that dumb meme," said Jovan Haye, who was Cutler's teammate for four years

at Vanderbilt and went on to play for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. "Jay's Jay. He's never changed. That face is the same face I saw every game at Vanderbilt."

Bob Clayton was Cutler's high school football coach. It irks him when critics question Cutler's toughness. He has vivid memories of that 27-0 state semifinal victory over perennial powerhouse Roncalli of Indianapolis. Heritage Hills, from a rural corner of Indiana, was the underdog. Cutler had spent the week on crutches with a sprained left ankle, and his status for the game was in doubt.

Cutler not only played, he threw three touchdowns and intercepted three passes as a safety. A week later, Cutler led the Patriots to the school's first and only state football title, culminating a 15-0 season.

"Jay is the most misinterpreted guy in the NFL," Clayton said. "He's been raked over the coals so many years now. It hurts me. It's disrespectful. I want to punch the guys on the TV sometimes because they don't really know Jay Cutler, and they don't know what they're talking about. He was one of the most competitive kids I've ever seen. He played quarterback and safety, was our punt and kick returner. That kid never left the field."

Adam Kress played on that high school team. He says Cutler's sideline demeanor then was the same as in the pros. "He didn't show much emotion or give speeches; but one time, he thought I took a play off, and he grabbed me by the facemask and let me have it. The guy wanted to win. Anyone who thinks otherwise doesn't know Jay."

Jay was the first child of Jack and Sandy Cutler, and has two younger sisters, Joy and Jenna. Jack, a former star high school running back, became a police officer and started a concrete company called Cutler and Son. Jay helped his father pour concrete from a young age, and spent the rest of his time playing sports at Holly Park.

By the time he got to Heritage Hills High in 1997, everyone in town knew he was the kid with the rocket arm who could dunk a basketball, play every position on a football field and switch hit on the baseball diamond. His senior year, the Patriots averaged 51 points a game. Cutler completed 60 percent of his passes for 2,252 yards and 31 touchdowns. He ran for 493 yards and six touchdowns, and also returned six kicks for scores.

He was voted All-State in football and basketball and honorable mention as a baseball shortstop.

Cutler was heavily recruited by the University of Illinois, and planned to go there, but Illini Coach Ron Turner changed his mind and gave the scholarship to a California kid named Matt Dlugolecki, who trans-

ferred to San Diego State after one season. As fate would have it, Cutler and Turner were reunited with the Bears, where Turner was the offensive coordinator.

Jay Burch, Cutler's high school athletic director, reached out to Vanderbilt and they signed Cutler. He started as a safety on the scout team, and before long had unseated highly touted David Koral as the starting quarterback.

"Jay never gave speeches in the locker room or huddle. That isn't Jay," Holloway said. "He was a one-on-one leader."

After good showings at the Senior Bowl and NFL Combine, Cutler was taken by Denver in the first round of the 2006 draft, the 11th pick overall and third quarterback selected. The other two — USC's Heisman Trophy winner Matt Leinart and Vince Young of Texas — are no longer in the NFL. Word is the New York Jets, under then-general manager Mike Tannenbaum, were very high on Cutler. Eleven years later, Tannenbaum signed Cutler for the Dolphins.

Broncos fans were excited about Cutler, whose athleticism drew comparisons to John Elway and Brett Favre. He made the 2008 Pro Bowl. But coach Mike Shanahan was fired that year, and Cutler, known for his bluntness, expressed his displeasure. Word leaked that new coach Josh McDaniels might trade Cutler for New England's Matt Cassel. Things turned sour, Cutler asked to be traded and was lambasted in the national media.

ESPN.com columnist Gene Wojciechowski wrote: "Will someone please give Jay Cutler his pacifier, hand him his favorite blankie and put him back in his crib for his afternoon nap?" Cutler supporters say McDaniels mishandled the situation and was to blame for the messy breakup.

The Bears gave up two first-round draft picks to get Cutler from Denver. He arrived in Chicago to a hero's welcome, expected to return the Bears to Super Bowl glory. It didn't happen. He was 51-51 as a starter through eight seasons, enduring a revolving door of six offensive coordinators.

His leadership and toughness were called into question, particularly after he left the 2011 NFC Championship Game down 14-0 with a knee injury and stood off by himself during the second half. Critics say he should have played hurt, or at least engaged with teammates. Supporters say he was frustrated coaches pulled him from the game.

After the 2016 season, Cutler announced his retirement. He got a job as a Fox analyst. But last week, the Dolphins called, and his career got a restart.

Cowboys' RB Elliott hit with six-game ban

Associated Press

Dallas Cowboys running back Ezekiel Elliott was suspended for six games Friday after a yearlong NFL investigation of his domestic violence case in Ohio.

The 2016 NFL rushing leader was suspended despite prosecutors in Columbus, Ohio, deciding a year ago not to pursue the case involving Elliott's girlfriend at the time in the same city where Elliott starred for Ohio State.

The league said there was "substantial and persuasive evidence" that Elliott had physical confrontations last summer with his then-girlfriend, Tiffany Thompson. Elliott will be eligible to return to the active roster on Oct. 23.

Elliott has three days to appeal the ruling. One of his agents didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.

The NFL Players Association said it was reviewing the decision and had been in touch with Elliott's representatives.

The league revised its personal conduct policy in 2014 following sharp criticism of a case involving former Baltimore running back Ray Rice.

In a letter to Elliott informing him of the league's decision, NFL special counsel for conduct Todd Jones said advisers brought in by the league "were of the view that there is substantial and persuasive evidence supporting a finding that (Elliott) engaged in physical violence against Ms. Thompson on multiple occasions during the week of July 16, 2016."

The Ohio case was the first in a series of off-field incidents involving Elliott in his first year after the Cowboys made him the fourth overall pick in the 2016 draft.

Elliott was seen in a legal marijuana shop during the preseason in Seattle last year and was caught on video pulling down a woman's shirt during a St. Patrick's Day parade in Dallas this past spring. He was also involved in a bar fight in Dallas a week before training camp.

Preseason roundup

Bears' QB Trubisky impressive

Associated Press

CHICAGO — Mitch Trubisky threw for 166 yards and led three scoring drives after Mike Glennon struggled for Chicago, before the Denver Broncos scored two long touchdowns in the closing minutes to beat the Bears 24-17 in the preseason opener on Thursday night.

Denver's Trevor Siemian did nothing to hurt his standing as the leader for the starting quarterback job, while Paxton Lynch did little to close any ground.

The biggest development in this game was Trubisky showing exactly why general manager Ryan Pace traded up a spot with San Francisco to draft him with the No. 2 overall pick.

The North Carolina product completed 18 of 25 passes in his first pro appearance after making just 13 college starts.

Trubisky replaced veteran Mark Sanchez late in the second quarter and completed his first 10 passes while leading Chicago to touchdowns on his first two possessions and a field goal on the next one. That gave the Bears a 17-10 lead.

Glennon had a rough time in his first appearance for Chicago. Signed to a three-year contract after the Bears parted with Jay Cutler, he was 2-for-8 for 20 yards with a zero QB rating. Chris Harris Jr. intercepted an overthrown pass on the game's third play from scrimmage and returned it 50 yards for a touchdown.

Browns 20, Saints 14: Myles Garrett showed flashes of dominance in his NFL exhibition debut, and Cleveland rookie quarterback DeShone Kizer threw a late touchdown pass to lead his team past visiting New Orleans while stars Drew Brees and Adrian Peterson watched.

The No. 1 overall pick in this year's draft, Garrett had a tackle for loss and blazed off the edge to pressure Saints backup QB Garrett Grayson

in the first half.

Packers 24, Eagles 9: Quarterback Carson Wentz had a perfect preseason debut for visiting Philadelphia.

Wentz went 4-for-4 for 56 yards and a score on his first series, eluding a potential sack and burning the Packers on third and fourth downs in Philadelphia's loss.

Dolphins 23, Falcons 20: Now the NFL's highest-paid running back, Devonta Freeman looked the part in a brief appearance, scoring on a 15-yard reception from Matt Ryan as Atlanta lost to host Miami.

Freeman, who agreed to terms Wednesday on a \$41.25 million, five-year contract extension, scored to cap the Falcons' first preseason possession.

Vikings 17, Bills 10: Quarterback Teddy Bridgewater need not rush back from injury after Case Keenum showed glimpses of being a capable backup in visiting Minnesota's preseason-opening win over Buffalo.

Taking over for starter Sam Bradford, Keenum went 11-for-16 for 121 yards.

Jaguars 31, Patriots 24: Chad Henne hit Keelan Cole on a 97-yard touchdown pass, Corey Grant scored on a 79-yard run and visiting Jacksonville feasted on a New England lineup without Tom Brady and Rob Gronkowski — or much defense at all — to beat the defending NFL champions in their exhibition opener.

With the reigning Super Bowl MVP sitting out, Jimmy Garoppolo completed a Brady-like 22 of 28 passes for 235 yards and two touchdowns.

Ravens 23, Redskins 3: Ryan Mallett struggled in place of injured quarterback Joe Flacco, throwing for only 58 yards while playing the entire first half, and host Baltimore beat Washington in a sloppy preseason opener.

Spieth five strokes off lead

Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Jordan Spieth only needs to win the PGA Championship to complete the career Grand Slam.

It just feels like he has to win another U.S. Open.

Quail Hollow presented a stern test in the opening round of the final major, primarily because of the firm, fast and frightening greens for which the U.S. Open is known. The result was the highest score to lead the first round of the PGA Championship in seven years, a

4-under 67 by Kevin Kisner and Thorbjorn Olesen.

Both made birdie on the 18th hole with lengthy putts that trickled — and trickled — into the cup.

"You need to be defensive on these greens — you have to," Spieth said after his 72 left him five shots behind. "I was defensive and still had to make 4- to 5-footers for par on a couple of them."

Spieth didn't make a putt longer than 5 feet — that was for par on his second hole. He still hit the ball so well that he

grabbed two birdies late in the round that enabled him to keep the damage to a minimum. If he didn't make those birdies, he worried he might have shot himself out of the tournament.

"Given it's the first round, I know I'm still in it, but I know that tomorrow's round becomes that much more important," Spieth said. "If I'm five back at the start of the day, I've got to be less than five back after Friday to really feel like I can play the way this golf course needs to be played and still be able to win."

White Sox finish 3-game sweep of Astros

Associated Press

CHICAGO — The Houston Astros came into Chicago hoping to break one of their few slumps this season in a three-game series with the American League's worst team. Instead, they leave the Windy City reeling after being swept by the White Sox.

Meanwhile, White Sox fans got a glimpse of a potential South Side superstar who had his first big moments for the team.

Rookie Yoan Moncada homered to tie the game in the ninth inning and then drove in the game-winner with a single in the 11th to lead the White Sox to 3-2 win Thursday night, completing an improbable series sweep of the AL's best team.

The top White Sox prospect said his 11th-inning single was the first walk-off hit he's had at any level.

"It was something indescrib-

able," said Moncada, speaking through a translator. "My feelings, all my emotions were through the roof when I hit that ball and then when I was running the bases. It was something unique."

In the 11th, Leury Garcia led off with a single past diving second baseman Jose Altuve that was then bobbled by right fielder Josh Reddick, with Garcia advancing to second on the error. Altuve dove again for Moncada's hit off Francis Martes two pitches later but could only watch as the White Sox celebrated moments later near his spot in the infield.

"We're not in a great place right now, we obviously had a tough trip to this city," Astros manager A.J. Hinch said. "We'll move on to the next city and get ourselves right again."

Earlier, Moncada homered in the ninth with one out against Astros closer Ken Giles for his second career home run.

"A star is born," White

Sox manager Rick Renteria said. "He's taking some nice swings."

It was the third blown save of the season for Giles, who has converted 22.

"I threw a good pitch," Giles said. "I looked at the video, right on the outside corner, right on the black. I have to tip my cap to him. He put a good swing on it and drove it the other way. You can't really be mad at it."

Martes (4-2) took the loss after striking out all three batters he faced in the 10th inning, and then allowing the two singles in the 11th.

David Holmberg (2-3) got the last out of the 11th to earn the win. Carlos Rodon threw his third straight quality start without earning a win.

Rodon, a left-hander, tied a career-high with eight innings pitched, striking out four and allowing two runs on nine hits. Jake Petricka, Tyler Clippard, Brad Goldberg and Holmberg

combined to hold the Astros scoreless over the last three innings.

Houston right-hander Brad Peacock struck out five and gave up one run and seven hits in 6¹/₃ innings.

Jake Marisnick hit a home run and Marwin Gonzalez added an RBI double for the Astros, who have lost seven of their last nine games.

The Astros (71-43) still have a comfortable lead in the AL West but need to return to their early season form.

"It's frustrating," Giles said. "We've had a lot of success early and haven't really had bumps in the road. Right now, we're going through it and trying to find ourselves again. But we'll get it together as a team again and find ways to win."

Starting streak: Nicky Delmonico singled in the sixth inning, becoming the first White Sox player since at least 1913 to reach base safely in each of his first nine career games.

Roundup

Darvish picks up second win since trade to Dodgers

Associated Press

PHOENIX, Arizona — National League batting average leader Justin Turner and Kike Hernandez drove in a combined five runs, helping Yu Darvish pick up his second win in as many starts for the Los Angeles Dodgers in their 8-6 victory over the Arizona Diamondbacks on Thursday.

The Dodgers, with two wins in the three-game series with Arizona, have won or tied 18 straight series, not having lost one since June 5-7 against Washington. They have won 15 of their last 17 games.

The Diamondbacks have lost four of five.

The Dodgers staked Darvish to a three-run lead before he even took the mound. Two singles and a two-out walk to Logan Forsythe brought up Hernandez, who with two strikes pulled

a bases-clearing double into the left-field corner.

Darvish got out of the first two innings with six three-ball counts, and Arizona rallied as his pitch count climbed.

Blue Jays 4, Yankees 0: Marco Estrada and two relievers combined on a six-hitter, Jose Bautista hit a solo home run and Toronto beat visiting New York.

Estrada (5-7) pitched seven innings to win for the first time in 13 starts. The right-hander came in 0-5 with a 7.39 ERA since beating Texas on May 27.

Nationals 3, Marlins 2: Brian Goodwin had two hits, including a home run leading off the eighth inning, and host Washington rallied past Miami.

Angels 6, Mariners 3: Mike Trout looped a three-run double just inside the left-field line with two outs in the ninth in-

ning, and visiting Los Angeles cooled off Seattle.

The surging Mariners were coming off a 6-3 road trip to move into the second wild-card spot in the American League. Along with the ninth-inning problems, the Mariners saw ace James Paxton leave in the seventh inning with a strained left pectoral muscle.

Rays 4, Indians 1: Corey Dickerson's three-run homer in the eighth inning carried host Tampa Bay over Cleveland.

Pirates 7, Tigers 5: Rookie Josh Bell hit his 20th home run and drove in three runs, leading visiting Pittsburgh past Detroit.

Reds 10, Padres 3: Scooter Gennett hit a grand slam in the seventh inning, ending left-hander Brad Hand's long scoreless streak and rallying host Cincinnati over San Diego.

Orioles 7, Athletics 2: Trey

Mancini had three hits, including two home runs, Wade Miley pitched seven innings of three-hit ball and Baltimore slugged four home runs in a victory over host Oakland.

The Orioles have won four of their last six games and nine of their last 13.

Cardinals 8, Royals 6: Dexter Fowler hit a grand slam and drove in a career-high five runs to lead St. Louis over visiting Kansas City.

Twins 7, Brewers 2: Byron Buxton and Joe Mauer each had three singles and Minnesota beat host Milwaukee for the fourth consecutive game.

Mets 10, Phillies 0: Jacob deGrom pitched brilliantly until leaving in the seventh inning due to a contusion on his right triceps after being hit on a line drive by Nick Williams, and New York homered four times in a rout of host Philadelphia.