

Philippines says Chinese jets endangered patrol

Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine military chief on Saturday condemned what he said was the provocative actions of two Chinese air force aircraft that executed a dangerous maneuver and dropped flares in the path of a Philippine air force plane on routine patrol in the South China Sea.

All those aboard the Philippine air force NC-212i light transport plane were unharmed and returned safely to Clark Air Base north of Manila after Thursday morning's incident over the Scarborough Shoal, Gen. Romeo Brawner said, without providing other details.

A top Philippine security official told The Associated Press that the Chinese jets flew at a "very close distance" to the Philippine air force turbo-prop plane and "put the lives of our pilots in real risk and danger." Another security officer said at least eight flares came from the Chinese fighter jets.

Both spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sen-

"We reaffirm our commitment to exercise our rights in accordance with international law."

Romeo Brawner
Philippine general

sitivity of the incident.

The Southern Theater Command of the Chinese People's Liberation Army said in a statement Saturday that a Philippine Air Force aircraft on Thursday had "illegally" entered the airspace above Huan-gyan Island — the Chinese name for Scarborough Shoal, which China claims — and disrupted its training activities.

The command sent jets and ships to identify, track and drive away the Philippine aircraft, the statement added.

"The on-site operation was professional, standardized, legitimate and justified," it said, adding that forces remained on high alert and ready to defend China's national sovereignty

and security.

The command has warned the Philippines to "stop its infringement, provocation, distortion and hyping-up," the statement added.

The Philippines' Brawner said in a statement that "the incident posed a threat to Philippine air force aircraft and its crew, interfered with lawful flight operations in airspace within Philippine sovereignty and jurisdiction and contravened international law and regulations governing safety of aviation."

He said the incident has been reported to Manila's Department of Foreign Affairs, which has filed numerous diplomatic protests against China's increasingly aggressive actions in the disputed waters.

Brawner suggested the incident would not stop the Philippines from undertaking such patrols in the contested region.

"We reaffirm our commitment to exercise our rights in accordance with international law," Brawner said.

Aside from China and the

Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia, Vietnam and Thailand have overlapping territorial claims in the busy sea passage, a key global trade and security route, but hostilities have particularly flared since last year between Chinese and Philippine coast guard and navy forces in the Scarborough Shoal and another hotly disputed atoll, the Second Thomas Shoal.

The U.S. military has reported encountering such dangerous maneuvers by Chinese air force planes in the past over the disputed waters, where it has deployed fighter jets and navy ships to promote freedom of navigation and overflight. China has bristled at U.S. military deployments in the disputed region, saying these have endangered regional security.

Washington has repeatedly warned that it's obligated to defend the Philippines, its oldest treaty ally in Asia, if Filipino forces, ships and aircraft come under an armed attack, including in the South China Sea.

S. Korea tour length doubled for solo soldiers

BY DAVID CHOI

Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — The U.S. Army has doubled the tour length for single soldiers serving in certain roles on the Korean Peninsula.

Unaccompanied soldiers, or those who serve without a spouse or dependents on location, are expected to serve in South Korea for two years starting Aug. 1, according to an Army Publishing Directorate memo that day.

The policy applies to soldiers within seven career fields: air traffic control operators, UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter

repairers, working military dog handlers, counterintelligence agents, signal intelligence analysts, and enlisted and warrant officer special agents in the Criminal Investigation Division.

U.S. Forces Korea, the command overseeing roughly 28,500 U.S. troops on the peninsula, will review the list annually and update as needed, the memo states.

The change is meant "to improve readiness" in those fields, which require soldiers to train more to become "fully mission capable," according to the memo.

Soldiers who had permanent change-of-station orders to South Korea prior to

August will be exempt from the change but are "encouraged to voluntarily extend" for another year, according to the memo.

Most U.S. troops stationed in South Korea serve from Camp Humphreys, the largest U.S. military base overseas, about 40 miles south of Seoul in Pyeongtaek city. The installation is headquarters for USFK, U.N. Command, Combined Forces Command, Eighth Army and the 2nd Infantry Division.

The base also opened three housing towers for 216 accompanied households in 2022.

USS Abraham Lincoln steams toward Middle East

BY JOSEPH DITZLER
Stars and Stripes

The aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln and its strike group pulled away from Guam and Saipan after a four-day respite before heading to the Middle East.

The Abraham Lincoln and destroyers USS O'Kane and USS Frank E. Petersen Jr. left Naval Base Guam on Thursday; the destroyer USS Spruance departed Saipan in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands the same day, Petty Officer 3rd Class Aleksandr Freutel wrote in a news release posted on Pacific Fleet's website that day.

On Guam, 20 sailors and Marines assigned to Abraham Lincoln and Carrier Air Wing 9 reunited with more than 75 family members waiting pierside for their homecoming, Freutel wrote.

During their stay, Marines and sailors volunteered for beach, pier and hiking trail cleanups, as well as Island Girl Power, a charitable organization whose mission is to empower young Guamanian girls, according to the release.

They also took advantage of island tours, snorkeling, Jet Ski rentals and cultural barbecues.

"After a busy few weeks conducting flight operations, replenishments-at-sea, and training across the strike group, we are grateful for the opportunity to enjoy the beauty and culture of Guam on our first port call," the carrier's commander, Capt. Pete Riebe, said in the release.

The Abraham Lincoln and Carrier Strike Group 3 were ordered on Aug. 2 to relieve the USS Theodore Roosevelt strike group, which was reportedly in the Persian Gulf that day.

Carrier Air Wing 9 aboard the

Abraham Lincoln consists of a Marine F-35C Lightning II squadron, three Navy F/A-18E/F Super Hornet squadrons, and electronic attack, airborne early warning and two helicopter squadrons.

U.S. carriers in the Middle East operate under Central Command to defend commercial shipping and allied warships from drone and missile attacks by Houthi militants acting in solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza. The attacks come almost daily.

CENTCOM on Friday reported its forces had over the previous day destroyed two anti-ship cruise missiles and one ground control station in Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen. The Houthis are backed by Iran, which also supports Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon, adversaries of U.S. ally Israel.

5 arrested for rocket attack on base in Iraq

BY CAITLYN BURCHETT
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Five individuals were arrested in connection with a rocket attack on an air base in western Iraq earlier this week that injured four U.S. troops and a defense contractor, the Pentagon confirmed Thursday.

The arrests were announced by the Iraqi Security Media Cell, an official body responsible for disseminating security information.

"We certainly welcome those actions. We have a good partnership with the Iraqi government," said Sabrina Singh, deputy press secretary for the Pentagon.

The Americans were injured when two rockets struck al Asad Air Base at about 9 p.m. local time Monday. Of those injured, three service members have been transferred to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany for continued treatment. The contractor and one service member have returned to duty.

An initial assessment from the Defense Department said seven Americans were injured. However, two additional individuals who were thought to be injured were screened by medics and immediately cleared to return to duty, Singh told reporters Thursday at the Pentagon.

In the attack, three rockets were launched by an Iranian-backed militia. Two impacted the base, while the third rocket was intercepted. U.S. Central Command is investigating how the rockets got through defense measures, Singh said.

US submarine trains in Mediterranean amid growing tensions in Middle East

BY ALISON BATH
Stars and Stripes

NAPLES, Italy — A U.S. submarine recently trained with American and allied forces in the Mediterranean Sea as the Pentagon bolsters its forces in the Middle East amid deepening worries of an Iran-Israel conflict.

The guided-missile submarine USS Georgia finished a series of training events with Force Reconnaissance Marines from the 2nd Reconnaissance Battalion and special operations forces on Monday, U.S. Naval

Forces Europe-Africa/U.S. 6th Fleet said in a statement posted to its website on Friday.

The training, a portion of which included forces from the U.K., Norway and Italy, demonstrated the ability of the service's submarine fleet to easily integrate amphibious and special warfare into existing missions, the service said. USS Georgia, homeported in Kings Bay, Ga., is assigned to the task force, which is responsible for submarine operations within the 6th Fleet area of operations.

The Navy rarely reveals the

location of its submarines. But in November, U.S. Central Command announced that an unidentified Ohio-class submarine was in the Middle East as the U.S. worked to prevent the Hamas-Israel war from widening.

The Defense Department's most recent show of strength follows Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin's announcement on Aug. 2 that he was ordering more fighter jets and warships to the region in response to threats from Iran after the killing of a top Hamas official in Tehran.

Debby leaves US as floods, power outages linger

Associated Press

The sun came out but the power stayed off in more than 100,000 homes and businesses across four states Saturday as Debby finally moved out of the United States. After first arriving in Florida as a hurricane, the storm spent the better part of a week unleashing tornadoes and flooding, damaging homes and taking lives as it moved up the East Coast.

Though the skies cleared, a flood warning remained in effect until Saturday night in a small part of northern New York where up to 7 inches of rain fell. The National Weather Service said water there was receding slowly, and many roads remained flooded.

Nearly 170,000 customers in Ohio, New York, Pennsylvania and Vermont had no electricity Saturday afternoon, according to PowerOutage.us, and some utilities said restoration could take days. More than half the outages were in Ohio, where Debby-related storms including tornadoes blew through the northeastern part of the state Wednesday.

Debby's last day over the U.S. before moving over Canada inundated south-central New York and north-central Pennsylvania with rain Friday, prompting evacuations and rescues by helicopter. The post-tropical cyclone continued dropping rain on New England and southern Quebec on Friday night, though

conditions improved the following morning as the system continued moving northeast.

Some of the worst flash flooding in New York happened in villages and hamlets in a largely rural area south of the Finger Lakes.

In Steuben County, which borders Pennsylvania, officials ordered the evacuation of the towns of Jasper, Woodhull and part of Addison, and said people were trapped as floodwaters made multiple roads impassable. The recovery effort was underway Saturday morning, as emergency workers cleared debris and helped residents pump floodwater from their basements.

Officials in Tioga County in

north-central Pennsylvania said a search and rescue operation was going on for one person unaccounted for in the Knoxville area after flooding that prompted dozens of rescues.

Fire Chief William Goltz of Crary Hose Co. in Westfield said 30 to 50 water rescues were conducted using boats aided by two helicopters, and those rescued included some firefighters who became trapped while trying to help others.

Officials said about 100 people were displaced and several shelters opened, but by midday Saturday only 14 remained in one shelter. They urged people to document damage before beginning cleanup and to send them any images of the flooding.

Trump campaign says it is victim of foreign hack

The Washington Post

Donald Trump's presidential campaign said Saturday that it was the victim of a foreign hack, after the campaign received questions from news organizations about a lengthy vetting document on vice-presidential nominee Sen. JD Vance, R-Ohio, sent to the outlets.

"These documents were obtained illegally from foreign sources hostile to the United States, intended to interfere with the 2024 election and sow chaos throughout our Democratic process," Steven Cheung, a

campaign spokesman, said in a statement.

Cheung pointed to a report released by Microsoft on Friday, in which the company said it had discovered evidence that Iranian hackers had tried to break into the email account of a "high ranking official" on a U.S. presidential campaign in June.

The company did not publicly identify the campaign or confirm whether it believed the hack had been successful. A person familiar with Microsoft's work confirmed the report's reference was to the Trump campaign.

Cheung did not disclose whether the campaign has been in contact with Microsoft and did not offer evidence for its assertion that the documents were hacked by Iran. But he said in a statement that the timing of the episode described by Microsoft coincides with Trump's selection of Vance as his running mate.

People familiar with the matter said the campaign separately concluded earlier this summer that its email system had been breached, but did not disclose it publicly or to law enforcement.

Phone calls from Uvalde school shooting released

Associated Press

DALLAS — As law enforcement officers hung back outside Khloie Torres' fourth-grade classroom in Uvalde, Texas, she begged for help in a series of 911 calls, whispering into the phone that there were "a lot" of bodies and telling the operator: "Please, I don't want to die. My teacher is dead. Oh my God."

At one point, the dispatcher asks Khloie if there are many people in the room with the 10-year-old, who survived.

"No, it's just me and a couple of friends. A lot of people are," she says, pausing briefly, "gone."

Calls from Khloie and others, along with body camera footage and surveillance videos from the May 24, 2022, shooting at Robb Elementary School, were included in a massive collection of audio and video recordings released by Uvalde city officials Saturday after a prolonged legal fight.

The delayed law enforce-

ment response to the shooting has been widely condemned as a massive failure: Nearly 400 officers waited more than 70 minutes before confronting the gunman in a classroom filled with dead and wounded children and teachers. Families of the victims have long sought accountability for the slow police response in the South Texas city of about 15,000 people 80 miles west of San Antonio.

Brett Cross' 10-year-old nephew, Uziyah Garcia, was

among those killed. Cross, who was raising the boy as a son, was angered that relatives weren't told the records were being released and that it took so long for them to be made public.

"If we thought we could get anything we wanted, we'd ask for a time machine to go back ... and save our children, but we can't, so all we are asking for is for justice, accountability and transparency, and they refuse to give this to us," he said.

Zelenskyy indirectly confirms Russia incursion

Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Days after Ukraine began a surprise military incursion into Russia's Kursk border region, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy broke the government's silence on it late Saturday by indirectly acknowledging ongoing military actions to "push the war out into the aggressor's territory" in his nightly address.

Overnight into Sunday, a Russian drone and missile barrage on Kyiv killed two people including a 4-year-old boy. In Russia, Kursk's regional governor said that a Ukrainian missile shot down by Russian air defenses fell on a residential building, wounding 13 people.

Russia attacked Ukraine with four ballistic missiles and 57 Shahed drones, Ukraine's Air Force said. Air defenses shot down 53 drones.

The bodies of a 35-year-old man and his son were found under rubble after fragments of missiles fell on a residential area in Kyiv's suburban Brovary district, according to Ukraine's State Emergency Service on Sunday. Another three people in the district were also injured in the attack.

Serhii Popko, head of the Kyiv City Military Administration said that it was the second time this month Kyiv was targeted.

Popko said ballistic missiles did not reach the capital but that

suburbs took the hit, while drones aiming for the capital were shot down.

Zelenskyy, citing preliminary information, said that Russia had used a North Korean missile in the strike. Ukraine and the U.S. have previously said that Russia has used North Korean missiles.

Meanwhile, Ukraine's incursion into Russia continued for a sixth day. The largest such attack since the full-scale invasion and unprecedented for its use of Ukrainian military units on Russian soil, it caught Moscow unaware and was an embarrassment to Russian military leaders who have scrambled to contain the breach.

The exact aims of the operation remain unclear and Ukrainian military officials have adopted a policy of secrecy, presumably to ensure its success. Military experts have said that it is likely intended to draw Russian reserves away from the intense fighting in Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region, while a presidential adviser suggested it may strengthen Kyiv's hand in any future negotiations with Russia.

Kursk acting governor Aleksei Smirnov said on Sunday that a "Ukrainian sabotage and reconnaissance group" entered the Belovsky district the previous day, but that the situation had been "stabilized."

Study says Marine force in Australia should increase

BY SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

Australia should welcome a U.S. Marine Corps rotational force eight times the size of one that now spends six months each year near the northern city of Darwin, a conservative Australian think tank said in a recent report.

"The Australian government should open discussions with the U.S. to host a rotational presence of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade potentially of around 16,000 personnel, bringing with it significant increased firepower and aviation assets," the Institute of Public Affairs in Melbourne, Australia, recommended in a report released Wednesday.

Marines have been coming to Darwin annually since 2012. This year, 2,000 arrived in the northern Australian port city in March for the rotation.

Meanwhile, Australia and the United States — concerned about China's rapid military build-up, threat to Taiwan and influence-building efforts in the

region — are investing billions to enhance Australia's northern military bases.

"A larger USMC presence in northern Australia offers the cheapest boost to deterrence Australia could possibly buy," the Australian report states. "This approach complements the American military strategy of dispersal through the Indo-Pacific and would add substantially to U.S. and Australian capacity to train with and engage the armed forces of neighbouring countries."

Multiplying the number of Marines in the Northern Territory may require overtures to other states in Southeast Asia, according to the report.

"We think a larger USMC presence would mostly be welcomed," the report states. "It offers strategic reassurance to our closer Southeast Asian neighbours and would be a welcome exercise and training partner."

The think tank suggested increasing the rotational force between 2025 and 2028.

Seoul: N. Korea resumes its trash balloon flights

Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — South Korea's military says North Korea is again flying balloons likely carrying trash toward the South, adding to a bizarre psychological warfare campaign amid growing tensions between the war-divided rivals.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said Saturday that the winds could carry the balloons to regions north of the South Korean capital, Seoul.

Seoul City Hall and the Gyeonggi provincial government issued text alerts urging citizens to beware of objects dropping from the sky and report to the military or police if they spot any balloons.

There were no immediate reports of injuries or property damage.

North Korea in recent weeks has flown more than 2,000 balloons carrying waste paper, cloth scraps and cigarette butts toward the South in what it has described as a retaliation toward South Korean

civilian activists flying anti-Pyongyang propaganda leaflets across the border.

Pyongyang has long condemned such activities as it is extremely sensitive to any outside criticism of leader Kim Jong Un's authoritarian rule.

North Korea last flew balloons toward the South on July 24, when trash carried by at least one of them fell on the South Korean presidential compound, raising worries about the vulnerability of key South Korean facilities.

The balloon contained no dangerous material and no one was hurt, South Korea's presidential security service said.

South Korea, in reaction to the North's balloon campaign, activated its front-line loudspeakers to blast broadcasts of propaganda messages and K-pop songs. Experts say North Korea hates such broadcasts because it fears it could demoralize front-line troops and residents.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Arctic Ocean community hits record 89 degrees

AK DEADHORSE — An industrial community near the Arctic Ocean hit a record 89 degrees last week, the warmest temperature Deadhorse has seen in more than a half-century of record keeping.

The unincorporated community marks the end of the 414-mile Dalton Highway, a largely gravel and dirt road used by trucks carrying oil field supplies and equipment that turns to treacherous snow and ice in winter.

The normal temperature range for Deadhorse this time of year is in the 50s and 60s, said Andrew Stokes, a National Weather Service meteorologist in Fairbanks. The 89-degree mark hit Tuesday eclipses the prior recorded high of 85 degrees set in July 2016, he said.

Balloon causes power glitch and water woes

LA NEW ORLEANS — A small balloon striking a utility line near a New Orleans drinking water plant caused only a brief power outage but was followed by a drop in water pressure, a serious injury to a worker trying to restart water pumps and a boil water advisory for most of the city.

The outage and the unusual circumstances that followed pointed to both the vulnerability of New Orleans' infrastructure and the recurring problem of Mylar balloons striking power lines.

Entergy New Orleans, which provides electricity in the city, said in a statement that a Mylar balloon caused a "flicker" of low

voltage at the water treatment plant that serves most of New Orleans. But it caused four pumps at the station to trip off, according to the executive director of the city's Sewerage and Water Board.

DNA links former Green Beret in coup attempt

FL MIAMI — Federal investigators said they found the DNA of a former Green Beret on some of the 60 automatic weapons he allegedly smuggled from Florida to South America as part of a failed 2020 coup attempt against Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro.

The allegations were detailed in court papers filed days after Jordan Goudreau's recent arrest and contain the strongest evidence yet linking him to illegal arms trafficking that facilitated the amphibious raid, which ended with several fighters killed and two of Goudreau's former Special Forces colleagues locked away for years in Venezuela.

The plot was carried out by a ragtag group of Venezuelan army deserters whom Goudreau allegedly helped arm and train in neighboring Colombia. Goudreau later claimed responsibility for the putsch, but said he was acting in concert with the Venezuelan opposition to protect democracy.

Attorney general OKs Black studies course

GA ATLANTA — A new Advanced Placement course in African American Studies doesn't violate Georgia's law against teaching divisive racial concepts be-

cause the law exempts AP and similar college-level courses taught to high schoolers, Georgia's attorney general said.

Attorney General Chris Carr, a Republican, wrote this determination to state Rep. Will Wade, a Dawsonville Republican who authored the measure.

Georgia's Superintendent of Schools Richard Woods has also requested an opinion from Carr on the issue, after Woods had refused to recommend the course for approval by the state Board of Education because he thought it broke the law.

City votes on camping ban except some areas

OR PORTLAND — The small Oregon city at the heart of a recent landmark U.S. Supreme Court ruling that allows cities to enforce outdoor sleeping bans has voted to prohibit camping but establish certain areas where homeless people can go.

The Grants Pass City Council voted 7-0 to ban camping on public property such as parks and create four sites across the city where homeless people can set up their tents.

The move marks the city's first change to its anti-camping laws since the high court's June decision paved the way for outdoor sleeping bans across the country. Local officials in the mountain town have struggled for years to address a homelessness crisis.

Plan to find pot growers raises privacy concerns

ME BANGOR — Operators of illegal marijuana grow enterprises hidden

inside rural homes in Maine don't have to worry much about prying neighbors. But their staggering electric bills may give rise to a new snitch.

An electric utility made an unusual proposal to help law enforcement target these illicit operations, which are being investigated for ties to transnational crime. Critics, however, worry the move would violate customers' privacy.

More than a dozen states that legalized marijuana have seen a spike in illegal marijuana grow operations that utilize massive amounts of electricity.

It'd be far more efficient, he suggested to utility regulators, to flip the script and allow electric utilities to report their suspicions to law enforcement.

Deputy rescues missing 5-year-old from pond

FL DELTONA — A sheriff's deputy ran through the woods, ripped off his bulletproof vest and ran into a pond after hearing the cries of a missing 5-year-old autistic boy.

Volusia County Sheriff's Deputy Wes Brough scooped the boy up, and the child wrapped his arms tightly around Brough's neck as they trudged back to dry land in Deltona, which is near Daytona Beach on Florida's Atlantic Coast.

Deputies had responded to a call of a missing child around 7:30 p.m. The father told deputies the child had escaped through a second-story door, which set off an alarm, according to an account of the incident posted on the sheriff's Facebook page.

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Curry leads US to men's basketball gold

Associated Press

PARIS — Stephen Curry was thinking about this two years ago, after winning his fourth NBA title with the Golden State Warriors. The only thing left for him to win was Olympic gold.

And in the ultimate moment, he made sure that medal would be his.

The United States is atop the international men's basketball world once again, after Curry scored 24 points — all on 3-pointers — and led the way to a 98-87 win over France in the final at the Paris Games on Saturday night. It was the fifth consecutive gold medal for the U.S. and the 17th in 20 all-time appearances for the Americans at the Games.

"You just stay confident, stay present and don't get rattled by the moment," said Curry, who had 17 3-pointers in his last two games, starting with nine against Serbia to get to the gold-medal game.

Added U.S. coach Steve Kerr: "Steph earned this."

Curry made four 3-pointers in the final 2:43, including the one that just sealed the win with 1:19 remaining. It put the U.S. up 93-84 and he skipped down the court letting out a yell, shaking his jersey so everyone could see the "USA" across the front.

If that wasn't enough, one more followed with about 30 seconds left — along with the go-to-sleep move where he puts his hands together on the side of his face. "Night night," he calls it, and he came prepared, with a special shirt to wear after the game for a champagne-and-cigars celebration. "Nuit nuit," it said, the French translation.

Good night. Game over. Gold won. Again.

"For me to get a gold medal is insane, and I thank God for the opportunity to experience it," Curry said.

Kevin Durant — the first four-time men's gold medalist in Olympic basketball history — scored 15 for the Americans, as did Devin Booker.

LeBron James, wearing metallic gold shoes that needed no explanation, scored 14 for the U.S. as he won his fourth Olympic medal and third gold.

"Super humbled that I can still play this game," James said. "Played at a high level, played with 11 other great players and a great coaching staff and went on and did it for our country. It was a great moment around."

For the second consecutive Olympics, the French had to watch the Americans hold up U.S. flags in celebration after the title game. The French lost to the U.S. 87-82 in Tokyo three years ago, and this one was down to the final minutes.

That is, until Curry took over.

"I think we might be the only team in the world whose fans are ashamed of them if they get a silver medal," said Kerr, the Golden State coach whose two-summer run with the U.S. ends with a 21-3 record and Olympic gold — 11-0 this summer. "That's the pressure that we face. But our

players, and you saw Steph, they love the pressure. They appreciate this atmosphere and they were fantastic."

Victor Wembanyama, the NBA Rookie of the Year for San Antonio in his first Olympic final, was brilliant for France, scoring 26 points — the second-most ever against the U.S. in a gold-medal game, one behind the 27 that Drazen Dalipagic scored for Yugoslavia in 1976.

"I'm learning," Wembanyama said. "And I'm worried for the opponents in a couple of years."

Wembanyama covered his face in a towel afterward as the Americans celebrated. Guerschon Yabusele scored 20 for the hosts.

"For sure, it's a disappointment because we expected we could do it," France coach Vincent Collet said. "But we have to recognize at the end that they are better. We are very close... When they make fantastic shots, that's the difference."

American women win gold in eighth straight Olympics

Associated Press

PARIS — The U.S. women's basketball team had to overcome its greatest challenge in 32 years before extending the Americans' unprecedented run to eight straight Olympic gold medals. Led by A'ja Wilson, they came away Sunday with another victory at the Paris Games.

It was the closest — and maybe sweetest — of any other during the streak.

Wilson scored 21 points and the U.S. survived a last-second shot by former UConn standout Gabby Williams that was just inside the 3-point line to hold off France for a 67-66 win.

No team had been able to push the Americans during this impressive streak of 61 consecutive wins. Only two of those victories had been by single di-

gits before the game against France.

"It's amazing. It truly is a dynasty that we have built here at USAB has been incredible," Wilson said. "And I am so proud of the resilience that my team showed. We could have fumbled it many times, but we pulled through. To say I am a two-time gold medalist, I am so blessed."

The eight straight golds broke a tie with the American men's program that won seven in a row from 1936-68. The women's victory came less than 24 hours after the U.S. men's team also beat France in the title game. It was the first time in Olympic history that both gold-medal games featured the same two teams.

Unlike the men's game, this one came down to the final sec-

ond and one last shot by France.

The Americans were up 67-64 with 3.9 seconds left after Kahleah Copper hit two free throws. Marine Johannes brought the ball up the court to Williams who caught the ball just inside the 3-point line and banked in over the outstretched arms of Breanna Stewart for the final margin.

There was a brief delay before the officials signaled that it was a two-point shot, which led to the beginning of a celebration and a lot of happy hugs for the Americans and left the French players standing in disbelief after falling just short.

"Gabby hit some great shots down the end, tough shots," Wilson said. "We understood what we had in our locker room and leaning on each other and talking to one another and be-

lieving that we believed in each other and that's the greatest thing about it."

The American players went to celebrate with the celebrities sitting courtside that included men's basketball players LeBron James, Bam Adebayo, Derrick White, along with U.S. women's greats Lisa Leslie, Sue Bird and Dawn Staley.

Williams, who finished with 19 points, had hit a deep 3 a few seconds earlier to get France within one before Copper's free throws. She got a consoling hug from Staley.

"What a tremendous basketball game. The 12,000-plus that were here were just treated to an unbelievable environment and the level of athleticism and competitiveness that these players had," U.S. coach Cheryl Reeve said.

Swanson's goal ends US gold drought

Associated Press

PARIS — At just the right moment, Mallory Swanson yelled at teammate Sophia Smith not to go near the ball as it came through.

Swanson knew Smith was offside. But Swanson wasn't.

"I was like, 'Don't touch it! Leave it, leave it, leave it!'" Swanson said. "And then it was on me to put it away."

With that 57th-minute goal, the U.S. women's soccer team won its fifth Olympic gold medal by beating Brazil 1-0 in the tournament final Saturday at the Paris Games.

The Americans, who hadn't won gold since the 2012 London Olympics, closed out an undefeated run to the title in their first international campaign under new coach Emma Hayes.

Goalkeeper Alyssa Naeher preserved the win with a one-handed save on Adriana's header in stoppage time at Parc des Princes.

"We've grown so much," said Swanson, who was making her

100th national team appearance. "And that's really cool to me seeing that. We've grown on and off the field. And you keep probably hearing it — we're playing with joy. We're having so much fun and I'm just so happy."

The result is more heartbreak for Brazil and its iconic star, Marta. The six-time world player of the year has never won a Women's World Cup or an Olympics. This is expected to be her last major international tournament.

It was the third victory for the United States over Brazil in an Olympic final. The Americans also beat the Brazilians in 2004 in Athens and four years later in Beijing.

The United States also won gold medals at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics — the first time women's soccer was played at the Olympics — and in 2012 at London.

Brazil has never finished better than runner-up at the Olympics.

"I'm very emotional. It's been a dream of mine to be in this position," said Hayes, a London native. "I have to thank my dad because he's the one who pushed me to this point to be able to come and coach an unbelievable group of players that have received me so well and taken on board everything I have asked. They are tremendous people and players and role models. Yeah, I love them."

Three years ago in Tokyo, the U.S. had to settle for the bronze medal. The Americans were knocked out in the quarterfinals at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Games.

Marta was playing in her sixth Olympics. Her first was in 2004 — when she was just 18 — which ended with a silver. But she started on the bench after a two-game suspension for a hard foul on Spain's Olga Carmona in the team's final group match.

Hayes was hired as coach of the U.S. team in November but she didn't join the squad until May so she could finish out the

season with Chelsea — guiding the Women's Super League squad to its fifth straight title.

Hayes was tasked with turning around a U.S. team that crashed out of last summer's Women's World Cup earlier than ever before. Despite her short time with the Americans, she quickly fostered chemistry within the young squad, particularly between forwards Sophia Smith, Trinity Rodman and Swanson.

The trio scored 10 of the 12 U.S. goals in France. Naeher and the U.S. defense allowed just two goals.

"I think we're on this steady climb," Crystal Dunn said. "We know winning a gold medal is obviously amazing and we're all going to celebrate and soak this in. But there's life after this Olympics. I think we are going to embrace where we are but I think it's important that we realize there's so much more that we can do, and having Emma obviously now for the long haul is going to be incredible."

US relay teams win 2 golds to end dominant track run

Associated Press

SAINT-DENIS, France — A runaway win in one relay and another that was oh-so-close. A long-awaited celebration for France and a high jump competition that felt like it would never end.

What tied it all together on a frantic final day of Olympic track and field at the Stade de France was the most familiar sight of all: Americans on the medal stand, over and over again.

Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone and Gabby Thomas brought the curtain down on track by romping to a win in the women's 4x400 relay Saturday for America's 34th overall medal at the track and 14th gold. Thomas was part of the U.S. gold-medal

win a night earlier in the 4x100 women's relay.

Turning the race into a laughter on laps 2 and 3, the 400-hurdles and 200-meter gold medalists helped the United States finish more than 4 seconds ahead of second place and only .1 second off the world record set by the USSR in 1988.

The winning time: 3 minutes, 15.27 seconds.

"I think this generation of track and field is just on a different level," said McLaughlin-Levrone, who now has four gold medals in four events (to go with six world-record runs) over her career. "Everything is improving, including us, including our technique, including how we prepare. I don't think anything is impossible at this point."

In another race involving a different sort of .1-second margin, American hurdle gold medalist Rai Benjamin edged out 200-meter champion Letsile Tebogo of Botswana in the men's relay.

"I calculated that run very well, to a 'T,'" Benjamin said. "I have a really good, high track IQ on people and how they run and how to do a quick time, so I didn't have to get out too hard. Let's just save it up to come home."

Benjamin added this Olympic title to the one he claimed in the 400-meter hurdles a night earlier and prevented 200-meter champion Tebogo from giving Botswana another triumph over the Americans.

The U.S. quartet of Chris-

topher Bailey, Vernon Norwood, Bryce Deadmon and Benjamin completed the four laps in 2 minutes, 54.43 seconds, nearly a second faster than the American 4x400 team ran at the 2008 Beijing Olympics. And Saturday's time was just .14 seconds off the world record set by the United States in 1993.

It's the Americans' 19th gold in the 26 runnings of this relay at the Summer Olympics. No other country has more than two golds in the men's 4x400.

Fittingly, the final day of a track meet full of close calls and surprises featured two more races decided by .01 seconds — an 800-meter win by Kenya's Emmanuel Wanyonyi and a 100-meter hurdles victory for American Masai Russell.

Guardians end 7-game losing streak

Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — Steven Kwan homered on the second pitch of the game and Bo Naylor also went deep for the Cleveland Guardians in a 2-1 victory over the Minnesota Twins on Saturday night that stopped their season-long seven-game losing streak and created some space in the narrowing AL Central race.

Cleveland lengthened the lead on defending division champion Minnesota to 2½ games by ending its longest skid since April 22-28, 2022, as starter Gavin Williams (2-4) gave the Guardians six strong innings on just the right night.

Williams caught manager Stephen Vogt's attention with his look before the game after the Twins swept a doubleheader to start the series.

"I could tell he was ready. The way he got on the bus, the way he got here, it just seemed like a different demeanor out of him," Vogt said. "Not that it's bad normally, but just something a little different today. Man, he was special."

Yankees 8-4, Rangers 0-9: Carlos Rodón scattered three hits over 5⅓ innings and Austin Wells drove in four runs as host New York beat Texas in the first game of a doubleheader.

Corey Seager homered and rookie Cody Bradford pitched five strong innings in the second game as the Rangers beat the Yankees to earn a doubleheader split.

Rookie Wyatt Langford had two hits and stole a base, and Adolis García finished the doubleheader with five hits and an RBI as Texas snapped a three-game skid.

The victory in Game 2 was just the fourth in 14 games for the Rangers, who are 6½ games behind AL West frontrunners Houston and Seattle. The Yankees finished the day a game behind Baltimore in the AL East and for the best record in the AL.

Athletics 1, Blue Jays 0: Osvaldo Bido and three relievers combined on a two-hitter, Brent Rooker hit his 29th home run and visiting Oakland beat Toronto for its ninth shutout of the season.

Toronto's Vladimir Guerrero Jr. singled in the first inning, extending his hitting streak to 22 games and matching the longest streak of his career. Guerrero also had a 22-game hitting streak in 2022. His current streak is the longest active streak in the major leagues.

Giants 3, Tigers 1: Brett Wisely hit a two-run double in the fifth inning and host San Francisco rebounded after being no-hit for four innings, beating Detroit.

After being held without a hit by Detroit's Alex Faedo and Brant Hurter (0-1), the Giants opened the fifth with consecutive singles by Mike Yastrzemski and Jerar Encarnacion before Wisely drove in two runs with a double down the right-field line. Heliot Ramos followed with an RBI single, scoring Wisely.

Astros 5, Red Sox 4: Yordan Alvarez belted two home runs and drove in three runs, rookie right-hander Spencer Arrighetti struck out a season-high 13 over seven innings and visiting Houston beat Boston.

Zach Dezenzo hit his first major-league homer and Alex Bregman added a solo shot for the AL West-leading Astros, who won their second straight over Boston and fourth straight overall.

Padres 9, Marlins 8 (10): Luis Arraez had two hits and drove in three runs, including a go-ahead RBI groundout in the 10th inning, and visiting San Diego beat Miami.

David Peralta singled twice and doubled for the Padres, who have won 16 of their last 18 games.

Brewers 1, Reds 0: Rhys Hoskins hit a 405-foot home run

in the eighth inning to lift host Milwaukee to its fifth straight win and ninth straight series win over Cincinnati.

Hoskins' 20th homer came off reliever Tony Santillan (0-1), giving him a career-high 14-game hitting streak.

Nationals 5, Angels 4 (10): José Tena hit a game-winning RBI single in the 10th inning hours after being called up from the minor leagues, and host Washington defeated Los Angeles to earn its second walk-off victory in as many days.

James Wood homered and Alex Call had his fifth consecutive multi-hit game for Washington, which has won back-to-back games since sinking to a season-high 12 games under .500 on Thursday.

Royals 8, Cardinals 3: Bobby Witt Jr. drove in three runs and Michael Wacha struck out six in seven innings to lead host Kansas City to a win over St. Louis.

Maikel Garcia had an RBI single, Witt added an RBI triple and Salvador Perez hit a two-run, opposite field homer to right in the Royals' four-run seventh inning.

Cubs 3, White Sox 1: Miguel Amaya delivered a tiebreaking two-run single in the eighth inning, Dansby Swanson had two hits hours after his wife won an Olympic gold medal and the host Cubs beat the crosstown White Sox to complete a two-game sweep.

Nico Hoerner walked leading off the eighth against Chad Kuhl (0-2) and took second on Swanson's single. Pete Crow-Armstrong moved the runners up with a sacrifice bunt, and Amaya lined a two-run single, giving the Cubs a 3-1 lead and sending them to their eighth win in 10 games.

Orioles 7, Rays 5: Ramón Urias hit a go-ahead homer in the eighth inning, Ryan Mountcastle drove in three runs and AL East-leading Baltimore beat host Tampa Bay.

Baltimore took a one-game

lead over the Yankees in the division after New York split a doubleheader with Texas.

Diamondbacks 11, Phillies 1: Jake McCarthy hit two home runs, Ketel Marte got his 30th of the season before leaving with a left ankle contusion and host Arizona routed Philadelphia.

Corbin Carroll also homered for Arizona, which has won 14 of its last 17 games to move into a wild-card spot and within range of the Dodgers in the National League West.

Braves 11, Rockies 8: Matt Olson had two homers and a career-high six RBIs, Marcell Ozuna and Jorge Soler homered, and visiting Atlanta broke a six-game losing streak with a victory over Colorado.

Olson hit a two-run homer off Angel Chivilli (0-1) to break an 8-8 tie in the seventh inning and Soler added a solo shot in the eighth to help the Braves avoid their longest losing streak in nearly eight years (Aug. 13-20, 2016).

Dodgers 4, Pirates 1: Gavin Lux continued his resurgence with three RBIs, Teoscar Hernandez hit a home run and host Los Angeles got past standout rookie Paul Skenes and Pittsburgh.

Hernandez had three hits for the Dodgers, who won for the fifth time in their last seven games with their only two defeats in the stretch coming to the National League-best Philadelphia Phillies.

Mariners 4, Mets 0: Logan Gilbert threw seven scoreless innings and combined with two relievers on Seattle's major league-best 13th shutout of the season as it beat visiting New York.

Gilbert (7-8) was dominant, allowing just three hits and striking out six to pick up his first win since July 9. He allowed a leadoff single to Francisco Lindor then didn't give up another hit until Lindor's single in the sixth inning.