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Admiral: China seeks East Asia control

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The commander of U.S. forces in the Pacific said Tuesday that China is seeking control of East Asia, comments that could further inflame tensions between the two world powers.

Adm. Harry Harris Jr. told a congressional hearing that China's construction and military facilities are changing the operational landscape in the disputed South China Sea, where Beijing has undertaken a massive land reclamation effort to press its sweeping territorial claims.

Harris told the Senate Armed Services Committee that China is militarizing the South China Sea, "and you have to believe in a flat earth to think otherwise."

Asked about the strategic goal of China's military buildup in the region, Harris told lawmakers: "I believe China seeks hegemony in East Asia." When asked if that meant regional control, Harris concurred.

His comments are likely to

anger Beijing, whose top diplomat was due to meet with Secretary of State John Kerry in Washington later Tuesday at a fraught time in relations.

The sides have been trading accusations over militarization in the South China Sea, an important thoroughfare for world trade where six Asian governments have competing territorial claims. The U.S. is not a claimant but says it has an interest in maintaining peace and stability there, and freedom of navigation and commerce.

The rhetoric has heated up since it emerged last week that China had deployed anti-aircraft missiles on a disputed island in the Paracels chain. Then, on Monday, a U.S. think tank reported that China has built new radar facilities in the Spratly Islands, which lie further south.

China denies it has aggressive intent. Its Foreign Ministry on Tuesday reasserted Beijing's right to develop its South China Sea island outposts, saying it has sovereignty over them.

"China is exercising the right of self-preservation that every country enjoys according to international law, which is beyond reproach," Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying told reporters in Beijing.

Another source of tensions with the U.S. has been differences over how to respond to North Korea's latest nuclear test and rocket launch. It's been seven weeks since the nuclear test and the U.S. and China still haven't agreed on how to censure Pyongyang.

While China has joined in the international criticism, it has balked at imposing the kind of tough economic sanctions that the U.S. wants, fearing it could threaten the stability of North Korea, a neighbor and traditional ally of Beijing.

In the meantime, the U.S. has taken tougher steps of its own, tightening sanctions and announcing it will hold formal talks with its close ally South Korea on deploying a missile defense system that China fears could be used against it as well

North Korea.

Harris said it was "preposterous" that China would try to "wedge itself" between South Korea and the U.S. for a missile defense system designed to defend Americans and Koreans on the Korean Peninsula.

He said if China is truly concerned, it should intervene with North Korea and convince it to quit its cycle of provocations.

Kerry and Wang were expected to discuss Tuesday how to reach a compromise over a U.N. Security Council resolution against the North Korea, and also the mounting differences over the South China Sea — issues that have put a growing strain on efforts to forge a cooperative relationship.

The Obama administration faces congressional pressure to step up its efforts to counter China.

Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., said that China is behaving like a "bully" in the Asia-Pacific. He said the administration's "risk aversion" has failed to prevent China's coercive behavior.

Military's refugee concerns addressed at meeting

BY DAN STOUTAMIRE

Stars and Stripes

WIESBADEN, Germany — U.S. Army and German government leaders held a community meeting Monday night to deal with concerns military community members might have about the refugees coming into Germany, particularly to Wiesbaden.

"The primary purpose is putting out some good, solid information to the community so they can know more about the refugee situation in the area so they're informed as opposed to misinformed, and to dispel a lot of the rumors that are going

around and to make sure our folks are fully aware instead of partially aware," said Col. Mary Martin, garrison commander.

In recent weeks and months, rumors have been circulating on social media that refugee children would be attending Department of Defense Education Activity Schools and that the city government was turning over buildings near current military housing areas to house migrants. These rumors aren't true, Martin said.

Community interest in the two-hour meeting was high, with nearly all seats at the Wiesbaden Middle School gym

filled and many people standing in the rear of the gym.

Roughly 1 million refugees from the Middle East and Africa are estimated to have come to Germany over the last year to escape terrorism and war in their native countries.

Recent attacks on women in some German cities by those believed to be refugees have caused a backlash by groups opposed to their settlement in the country. Earlier this week, onlookers cheered a fire that destroyed a hotel being converted into a shelter for refugees in Saxony, German police said.

Wiesbaden Mayor Arno Gos-

smann and Deputy Police Chief Thomas Fink told Monday's audience that the refugees haven't been causing problems here. In fact, Wiesbaden is among the safest cities in Germany, and since it began accepting refugees, crime has gone down, they said.

Fink and Gossman, along with Martin and garrison emergency services director Lt. Col. Michael Zink, gave presentations on the current situation and future plans to house and integrate migrants. They also talked about what the garrison is doing to protect its residents.

Afghan strikes hit weapons, kill militants

BY PHILLIP WALTER WELLMAN
Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan — Afghan ground forces and coalition airstrikes have killed up to 43 Islamic State militants in attacks in eastern Afghanistan, officials said Tuesday.

The group, which has occupied large areas of Syria, Iraq and Libya, has been struggling to establish a foothold in Afghanistan over the past year. It continues to face tough resistance from security forces and the local Taliban.

A government spokesman in eastern Nangarhar province said a large quantity of

weapons and ammunition belonging to the terrorist group was destroyed in the Monday operation.

"A number of Daesh fighters gathered in the Pekha Khwar area intending to attack Afghan security posts, but they were targeted by a drone," said Attaullah Khogyani, using an Arabic acronym for the extremist group. He said 25 militants were killed in the blast.

Hazrat Hussain Mashreqwal, a spokesman for Nangarhar police, confirmed the report. He said an additional 18 Islamic State militants have been killed in a separate ground operation by Afghan security

forces since Monday. The fighting was part of a military mop-up operation named Shaheen 18 that began 10 days ago.

Col. Michael Lawhorn, spokesman for NATO's Resolute Support mission, confirmed that a drone strike was carried out in Nangarhar's Achin district Monday but did not elaborate. Pekha Khwar is in the mountainous district bordering Pakistan.

The Islamic State group, which has tens of thousands of fighters in Syria and Iraq, has sought, with varying degrees of success, to spread to other regions, including North Africa and Central and South Asia.

An estimated 1,000 to 3,000 fighters pledging loyalty to the group are concentrated in Afghanistan's remote eastern border regions. Officials said they are operating in small mobile groups trying to stay ahead of the government and Taliban forces pursuing them.

Last month, after an attack on the Pakistani Consulate in Nangarhar's capital, Jalalabad, President Barack Obama gave U.S. commanders the authority to strike Islamic State targets in Afghanistan — the first such order allowing the U.S. military to attack the group outside its strongholds in Syria and Iraq.

Trump: Dubious posts are 'just retweets'

LAS VEGAS — Donald Trump has repeated inaccurate and racially charged crime statistics, reposted pledges of support from white supremacists and retweeted dubious questions about the citizenship of his presidential rivals to an online following of more than 6 million people on Twitter alone.

His response when challenged? To dismiss it all as nothing more than harmless "retweets."

Unlike any presidential candidate before him, Trump has fueled his campaign for the Republican nomination with a seemingly endless series of eyebrow-raising statements. It's a strategy unavailable to a conventional politician but seemingly tailor-made for the billionaire businessman, TV celebrity and master marketer.

"We've gone from a 24-hour news cycle to a 24-second news cycle," said GOP consultant Kevin Madden. "So right when you think Trump is about to endure a concentrated level of scrutiny for a false statement or the latest outrage, he is on to the next controversy."

From The Associated Press

Obama defends DOD plan to close Gitmo

BY COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon on Tuesday sent a plan to Congress that outlines the long-awaited closure of the Guantanamo Bay detention center and remains committed to moving some detainees from the controversial facility in Cuba to an existing prison in the United States.

The roughly 20-page plan, which was submitted on the deadline mandated in the 2016

National Defense Authorization Act, states that moving 56 unreleasable detainees into a single, existing state, federal or military prison would save the government between \$65 million and \$85 million each year.

The plan, endorsed by President Barack Obama, was largely expected to be rejected by Republican lawmakers, who have been instrumental in passing legislation banning such transfers of Guantanamo detainees into the U.S. Some Republican leaders on Tuesday

dismissed it as vague. House Armed Services Committee Chairman Mac Thornberry, R-Texas, called it "more press release than plan."

But Obama said he remains firmly committed to closing Guantanamo before he leaves office in January, calling the facility a propaganda tool for terrorists.

"I am very clear-eyed about the hurdles to finally closing Guantanamo," he said during a news conference at the White House.

McDonald testifies on VA firing, hiring plan

BY TRAVIS J. TRITTEN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Department of Veterans Affairs told the Senate on Tuesday that its plan to take sole control over firing executives could help fill dozens of vacant management posts at veteran medical facilities across the country.

VA Secretary Bob McDonald pitched some upsides of eliminating hundreds of VA executives' right to appeal firings to an independent merit board.

He said positives include higher pay and quicker hiring of medical officials, as he testified to lawmakers who are hoping to craft new legislation on VA firings by next month.

The VA has proposed the dramatic shift away from the employment protections as part of its upcoming annual budget just as the Senate is pushing ahead with legislation. It comes amid persistent public criticism over its seeming inability to fire misbehaving managers despite a nearly two-year ef-

fort by McDonald to clean up dysfunction and wrongdoing within the agency.

VA said a recent high-profile firing decision was thwarted by a Merit Systems Protection Board. Linda Weiss, director of the Albany-Stratton VA Medical Center in New York, was fired by VA Deputy Secretary Sloan Gibson for failing to properly handle staff misconduct, including theft of drugs, but was reinstated earlier this month by a board decision.

Cardinals have faith in arms

Associated Press

JUPITER, Fla. — Michael Wacha and the St. Louis Cardinals led the majors with 100 wins last season and won their third straight NL Central crown.

So the star right-hander finds it a bit perplexing that some observers don't think the Cards can repeat.

"I don't understand why people keep doubting us," Wacha said Saturday. "We'll accept that chip on our shoulder and use it to our advantage and play that underdog role, I guess."

The St. Louis staff led the NL with a 2.94 ERA and posted 106 quality starts.

Those accomplishments came, for the most part, without contributions from ace Adam Wainwright, who missed most of the year after tearing his Achilles tendon in his fourth start of the season.

Wainwright returned as a reliever toward the end of the season. This spring, he has resumed his role as the Cardinals' unquestioned leader among pitchers while consistently stating that last season's down time has his arm feeling refreshed.

"I do believe we have the potential to be the very best rotation in baseball," Wainwright said. "Now we just have to go out and play and make that happen."

Much of the negativity concerning the Cardinals' rotation stems from what hap-

pened — and what didn't happen — during the offseason.

The Cardinals knew that elbow ligament replacement surgery would force Lance Lynn to miss the 2016 season. John Lackey bolted via free agency to sign with the division rival Cubs. St. Louis also lost a bidding war with Boston for the services of David Price.

The Cardinals eventually signed Mike Leake, with whom they were quite familiar from his days with Cincinnati. Though spring camp has only been open for a few days, Cardinals' manager Mike Matheny is already seeing the kind of competitiveness from Leake that he'd come to expect when the right-hander was an opposing pitcher.

Leake may not have the same top-end credentials as Price, but moving from the notoriously hitter-friendly Great American Ballpark (with a brief stop in San Francisco) to the more pitcher-friendly confines of Busch Stadium should help Leake improve on his career 3.88 ERA.

"Busch could play real well for him," Matheny said. "The way that our defense plays behind him, I like his chances of having a great season this year."

Unlike recent camps where there's been at least one spot up for grabs in the rotation, barring injuries this year's starting five seems pretty much set, with Jaime Garcia and Carlos Martinez joining Wainwright, Wacha and Leake. This sea-

son the biggest concerns revolve around the question of stamina.

Shoulder issues plagued Garcia in recent years, but he started 20 games last season for the first time since 2012, winning 10 games while posting a 2.43 ERA.

The 24-year-old Martinez enjoyed a breakout year in 2015 before a shoulder injury kept the Cardinals from using him in the postseason. Wacha, also 24, similarly appeared to wear down at the end of the season, finishing at 17-7.

Both pitchers set career highs last season in innings thrown, Wacha with 181 1/3 and Martinez with 179 2/3.

"He's a young pitcher," Matheny said of Martinez. "Young pitchers, they get to a point where they've thrown more than they've ever thrown before. It's just the nature of the beast."

"Michael is the same way. We pushed last year, pushed to the limit that we could and then we backed off. It's not the same situation as it was a year ago. They grow."

The Cardinals intend to monitor every pitchers' workload this spring with an eye toward keeping them fresh for the long haul. Still, the top priority is getting them ready to start the season.

"It's a fine line, yeah" pitching coach Derek Lilliquist said. "You want them rested but you also want them ready. I would hate to have a well-rested, non-competitive pitcher."

Bautista tells Jays his terms

Associated Press

DUNEDIN, Fla. — Jose Bautista sees no reason for a lot of back and forth about his contract.

The Toronto slugger said Monday he has let the Blue Jays know what it would take to keep him, and is waiting for an answer. Bautista is entering the final year of his deal. The 35-year-old outfielder is coming off a 40-homer season in which he helped Toronto to an AL East title and its first postseason appearance since 1993.

"I don't think there should be any negotiations. I think I've proved myself, and the question has been asked — what will it take — and I've given them an answer," Bautista said. "I'm not going to sit here and try to bargain for a couple dollars."

Wearing a shirt that said "HOME IS TORONTO," Bautista spoke to reporters Monday after the Blue Jays held their first official workout for pitchers and catchers. It was fitting that Bautista's comments made the biggest news of the day. Toronto is still a team built around its offense after Bautista, Josh Donaldson, Edwin Encarnacion and Troy Tulowitzki powered the Blue Jays to the AL Championship Series last year.

Bautista and Encarnacion are in the final year of their contracts. Bautista said he let the team know a couple weeks ago what kind of deal he wanted, and that his agent has been involved in the process.

"I'm not trying to sound like it was adamant and I put down the law and I drew lines in the sand," Bautista said. "They asked me a question and I gave them an answer."

Toronto general manager Ross Atkins is expected to talk to reporters later this week. Atkins was hired to work with Blue Jays president Mark Shapiro after GM Alex Anthopoulos left the team this offseason.

Bautista said he has "nothing but praise" for what Shapiro and Atkins have done so far, even while his own future remains uncertain.

"I think they know and realize the things that I say and agree with me. It's just a matter of, are they willing to go there?" Bautista said. "And it's not just necessarily Ross and Mark. I can't say that, I don't know. Some of that decision making, of a contract the size that I presented, has to come from ownership."

The Blue Jays are owned by Rogers Communications.

"In a publicly traded company, everybody can track their performance fairly easy. It's not a secret. It's out in the public," Bautista said. "Stock prices are monitored very closely by the whole financial world, and I think there is a direct correlation with the success of their earnings-per-share after we start experiencing success. Are they going to put it out in the media and say because of the Jays, we made all this money? No. But everybody can read between the lines."

Bautista made \$64 million over the past five years, and the Blue Jays exercised his \$14 million option for 2016.

NFL combine more than numbers game

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Football fans see the NFL's annual scouting combine as merely a numbers game that comes down to the times, jumps and drills they witness on television.

NFL executives are more interested in getting behind-the-scenes answers through medical checks and personal interviews.

It's a delicate balancing act.

"When we finally get the measurables on the underclassmen, when we find out where they are medically, where they are physically, where they are with the interviews, then we'll have a better idea (of where they rank)," ESPN draft analyst Mel Kiper Jr. said on a conference call with reporters Monday, one day before the first players begin arriving in Indianapolis.

Sure, the workouts matter. Chris Johnson's draft skyrocketed after breaking the combine record with a 4.24-second 40-yard dash in 2008. Cornerback Byron Jones jumped up draft boards — literally — after a record-breaking broad jump of 12 feet, 3 inches last February. Both wound up being first-round picks.

The ramifications for those who underperform or sit out can be damaging, too.

In 2014, quarterback Teddy Bridgewater decided not to throw in Indy, then had a less-than-stellar pro day at Louisville. The result: A player thought to be in the running as the No. 1 overall pick was still available at the end of the first round, a plummet that cost Bridgewater big

bucks.

He led the Minnesota Vikings to the 2015 NFC North title this season.

The most costly mistakes come when teams miss red flags.

Two years after Cleveland took Heisman Trophy-winning quarterback Johnny Manziel, his off-the-field problems have led to wide speculation the Browns will release their once future franchise quarterback. San Diego and Oakland found themselves in similar dilemmas with Ryan Leaf and JaMarcus Russell, respectively, through the years.

That's why longtime NFL decision-makers, such as Hall of Fame executive Bill Polian, insist the most essential component during combine week is what nobody actually sees — real answers to some basic questions from the more than 300 players who show up each February, especially from players who have histories of injuries or off-the-field troubles.

Some other things to watch this week:

Medical tests: Nobody may have more at stake this week than two of this year's top-rated linebackers, UCLA's Myles Jack and Notre Dame's Jaylon Smith. Both finished their seasons with torn knee ligaments and while both could be taken among the first 15 picks, this week will be the first time NFL doctors have a real chance to get a peek at their recoveries.

Personnel moves: The next big players in the NFL are likely to take a backseat to some of the current biggest names in the league during the first two days of the combine, when coaches and general

managers typically provide offseason updates. With free agency looming, expect to hear plenty about the futures of players such as Robert Griffin III, Peyton Manning and Manziel among others.

Buyer beware: Every year, some player turns heads with big numbers, only to fail miserably. Past workout warriors on this list include Brent Fullwood, Mike Mamula and Tony Mandarich. One thing that is almost certain is it will happen again to some team this year.

Ex-RB Randle arrested

Former Dallas Cowboys running back Joseph Randle was jailed Monday in his hometown of Wichita, Kan., after police said he hit three people with a car and then broke through the front door of a home he had been asked to leave.

Police Lt. James Espinoza said Randle was ordered to leave a housewarming party early Sunday after getting into an argument. While backing out of the driveway, police say, he hit the 29-year-old man and 27-year-old woman who own the home and a 26-year-old man. Espinoza said the three weren't seriously injured, and retreated to the home as Randle left.

Espinoza said Randle returned moments later and broke through the front door. Espinoza said police arrived and arrested Randle, who was in possession of marijuana. Espinoza said he didn't know how Randle knew the homeowners or what he had argued about.



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Warriors fastest to 50 wins

Associated Press

ATLANTA — Stephen Curry pumped a fist, wagged a finger and even gave a little shimmy with his shoulders.

Chalk up No. 50 for the Golden State Warriors.

On a night when Curry scored 36 points — in other words, just another day at the office — the Warriors became the fastest team in NBA history to 50 wins in a season with a 102-92 victory over the Atlanta Hawks.

They surpassed the 1995-96 Chicago Bulls, who needed one more game to reach the milestone. Of course, that's the team Golden State is chasing for one of the league's most iconic marks.

Seventy-two wins.

"It's really cool," Klay Thompson, the other half of the "Splash Brothers," said after Monday's game. "Just being in the conversation with that Bulls team, it's humbling and it's surreal."

The Warriors (50-5) squandered a 23-point lead in the third quarter, actually falling behind Atlanta early in the fourth. But they bounced back, as they always seem to do, tightening up on defense and riding their dynamic guard duo to another triumph.

Thompson scored 12 of his 27 points in the final period, knocking down a pair of three-pointers. Curry chipped in with nine points, including a trey in front of the Atlanta bench that had him wiggling his shoulders.

"We're staying in the moment," Curry said. "It's a special group, and we understand the potential we have, but let's not get ahead of ourselves. Fifty wins is great, but we've got to keep plugging

away and staying hungry, because no one wants to talk about that in June."

Indeed, a second straight championship is the only way to make this a truly successful season, but the pursuit of Chicago's record — accomplished during the height of Michael Jordan's six-titles-in-eight-years dynasty — has provided quite an intriguing side plot to the regular season.

On their last long road trip of the season, the Warriors have bounced back from their worst loss of the season, a 137-105 drubbing at Portland last Friday. They knocked off the Clippers the following night, then made the trek to Atlanta to face the struggling Hawks, who had the best record in the East a year ago but have slipped this season.

"We just seem to respond every time we get a loss," coach Steve Kerr said. "Our guys are very competitive, so when we lose, they get angry and seem to rattle off a bunch of wins in a row. That's a pretty good sign. We don't have to motivate them much. They motivate themselves."

Pistons 96, Cavaliers 88: Reggie Jackson scored 23 points, Kentavious Caldwell-Pope added 19 and Detroit withstood host Cleveland's late comeback to end a five-game losing streak.

One day after allowing New Orleans center Anthony Davis to score 59 points with 20 rebounds, the Pistons beat the Eastern Conference's top team for the second time this season.

Andre Drummond added 15 rebounds for the Pistons, who let an 18-point lead in the fourth quarter dwindle to six before putting away the Cavs and ending their five-game winning streak.

Kyrie Irving scored 30 and Kevin Love 24 for Cleveland, which had an off night after looking so impressive in a win at Oklahoma City on Sunday.

Heat 101, Pacers 93 (OT): Goran Dragic scored 24 points, Hassan Whiteside finished with 19 points and 18 rebounds, and host Miami won its third consecutive game since the All-Star break, rallying from 14 points down to beat Indiana in overtime. Luol Deng added 13 points and 16 rebounds for Miami.

Paul George had 31 points and 11 rebounds for the Pacers, and Myles Turner scored 16. But Indiana's starting backcourt of Monta Ellis and George Hill combined to miss 22 of 24 shots.

Bucks 108, Lakers 101: Giannis Antetokounmpo had 27 points, 12 rebounds and 10 assists, and Milwaukee handed Los Angeles its sixth straight loss in retiring star Kobe Bryant's last trip to the Bradley Center.

Bryant had 15 points, shooting 3-for-12 from the field.

Clippers 124, Suns 84: J.J. Redick scored 22 points, DeAndre Jordan and Chris Paul had double-doubles and Los Angeles handed Phoenix its 12th consecutive loss overall and 15th in a row on the road.

Raptors 122, Knicks 95: Kyle Lowry had 22 points, 11 rebounds and 11 assists for his first triple-double of the season, DeMar DeRozan also scored 22, and visiting Toronto beat New York.

Timberwolves 124, Celtics 122: Karl-Anthony Towns had 28 points, 13 rebounds and four assists, and host Minnesota outlasted Boston.

Fired-up Sharks double up the Blues

Associated Press

ST. LOUIS — A big hit sidelined San Jose's Matt Tennyson and fired up the Sharks.

Tomas Hertl, Logan Couture and Joe Thornton each scored two goals, powering San Jose to a 6-3 victory over the St. Louis Blues on Monday night.

Thornton also had two assists as San Jose improved to 21-9-2 on the road, matching its total road wins from last season. At home, the Sharks are just 11-12-3.

Tennyson got hurt in the first period. Blues forward Ryan Reaves rammed the defenseman into the glass behind the San Jose goal and smashed his face into the divider. Tennyson dropped flat on his back at 8:37, and Reaves received a 5-minute major for boarding and a game misconduct penalty.

San Jose turned the sequence into two power-play goals.

"I think that's the ultimate retribution for a hit like that is to score two or three power-play goals and that decision basically cost them the game," San Jose coach Peter DeBoer said. "I think Matt's OK. He's not great, obviously. He's probably concussed and we'll see what else."

"Those are the kind of hits we're trying to get rid of so I'm sure the league will deal with it."

St. Louis defenseman Robert Bortuzzo said the hit was not intentional by Reaves.

"The game is moving real quick out there. Reaves plays the game hard and on the edge but he's never been known to be malicious or anything," Bortuzzo said. "It's a tough situation for a guy to go down."

Hertl had two of San Jose's three goals in the first. He also scored in the Sharks' 5-2 loss at Carolina on Friday.

San Jose went up 1-0 when Hertl grabbed a loose puck behind the net and jammed it in against Brian Elliott at 4:44.

Hertl scored his 14th goal after Tennyson got hurt. Elliott stopped Joonas Donskoi's shot, but the puck got behind him and Hertl pushed it over the line for a power-play goal at 10:18.

Capitals 3, Coyotes 2: Mike Richards scored his first goal in more than a year, leading host Washington past Arizona.

Alex Ovechkin put Washington ahead with his league-leading 39th goal of the season and had an assist. Evgeny Kuznetsov also had a goal and an assist for NHL-best Washington, which won its fourth straight and ninth in its last 10 games.

Predators 2, Canadiens 1 (SO): Craig Smith scored the only goal in the shoot-out, lifting Nashville to the road win.

Viktor Arvidsson scored in the first period for the Predators (28-21-11), who are 3-0-3 in their last six games.

Blue Jackets 6, Bruins 4: Boone Jenner scored two goals and Scott Hartnell had a goal and an assist, leading Columbus to the road win.

William Karlsson, Brandon Saad and Dalton Prout also scored for the Blue Jackets, who avoided a sweep in the three-game season series by picking up a point for 10th time in their last 12 games (7-2-3).

Miami rebounds, stuns Virginia

Associated Press

CORAL GABLES, Fla. — Miami shook off any lingering effects from its most lopsided loss of the season.

Davon Reed scored 21 points and the 12th-ranked Hurricanes rebounded from a 25-point thrashing at North Carolina with a 64-61 victory over No. 3 Virginia on Monday night.

"Among the captains we said we can't feel sorry for ourselves," Reed said. "That game hurt, but it's in the past."

Reed's two free throws with 3.9 seconds remaining increased Miami's lead to its final margin.

London Perrantes' game-tying attempt from 40 feet at the buzzer bounced off the backboard for Virginia.

"We needed to be the aggressors from start to finish tonight and we were," said Reed, who shot 6-for-8 from the field including 5-for-6 on three-point attempts. "We knew what was at stake and we responded."

Miami (22-5, 11-4) took over sole possession of second place in the Atlantic Coast Conference. The Hurricanes, Cavaliers (21-6, 11-5) and Louisville began Monday tied.

"We got knocked down big time on Saturday and you've got to get back up and fight to show what you're made of," Miami coach Jim Larranaga said. "I thought we did that tonight against an outstanding Virginia team."

Virginia rallied from an eight-point deficit with seven straight points behind Malcolm Brogdon's jumper and three-pointer and Perrantes' layup with 1:22 remaining that got the Cavaliers within 60-59.

Tonye Jekiri converted one of two free throws with 36 seconds left to make it 61-59. Brogdon's three-point attempt with 23 seconds left bounced off the rim.

"It was decent, it wasn't great," Brogdon said of his attempt. "It was a little off the dribble. I got it off but it didn't go in."

Brogdon tied a career high with 28 points and was the only double figure scorer for the Cavaliers. He shot 12-for-18 from the field and was 4-for-7 from beyond the arc.

"We fought hard in the second half, got on the offensive glass, played pretty spirited," Virginia coach Tony Bennett said. "I thought in the first half we were out on the edge with our transition defense. We were on our heels and they were really attacking."

Virginia's Isaiah Wilkins took a knee to the head with 4:51 remaining in the second half and stayed on the court while treated by the training staff. A dazed Wilkins eventually reached his feet and was escorted to the bench.

"He got hit, he had a headache," Bennett said. "Hopefully he'll be OK. We need his defensive prowess."

No. 14 West Virginia 97, No. 17 Iowa St. 87: Jaysean Paige scored a career-high 34 points to lead host West Virginia.

The Mountaineers (21-7, 10-5 Big 12) used their highest-scoring output in the Big 12 this season to avoid their first three-game losing streak in two years and swept the regular-season series from the Cyclones (19-9, 8-7).

Tarik Phillip added a career-high 22 points for West Virginia while Devin Williams had 13 points and nine rebounds.

The Mountaineers let an 11-point first-half lead slip away early in the second half before Paige and Phillip carried them down the stretch.

In losses to Texas and Oklahoma, Paige went a combined 4-for-18 from the field. He made 12 of 21 shots and all nine free throw attempts against the Cyclones.

Abdel Nader scored 23 points to lead six Iowa State players in double figures.

No. 25 Texas 71, Kansas St. 70: Isaiah Taylor scored 19 points, including a three-pointer to all but ice the game with less than a minute to play, for visiting Texas.

Javan Felix had 11 of his 13 points in the first half and Eric Davis, Jr. finished with 10 points for Texas (18-10, 9-6 Big 12). Connor Lammert had eight points and seven rebounds.

Kansas State (15-13, 4-11) was forced to play catch-up in the second half after falling behind by as many as eight points. When the Wildcats got as close as 66-65 with 1:03 to play, Taylor stepped back and hit a three-pointer with a defender in his face. Dean Wade later missed a possible game-winning three-pointer, as the Longhorns escaped with a much-needed conference victory.

Justin Edwards had 20 points and eight rebounds for Kansas State, while D.J. Johnson added 16 points and Wesley Iwundu had 12.