

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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## Trump: US operation kills al-Qaida leader

Associated Press

President Donald Trump said Thursday that the U.S. at his direction has conducted a counterterrorism operation in Yemen that killed Qassim al-Rimi, an al-Qaida leader who claimed responsibility for last year's deadly shooting at Naval Air Station Pensacola, where a Saudi aviation trainee killed three American sailors.

Al-Rimi is a founder of al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula. The affiliate has long been considered the global network's most dangerous branch for its attempts to carry out attacks on the U.S. mainland. Trump said the U.S. and its allies are safer as a result of his death.

"We will continue to protect the Ameri-

can people by tracking down and eliminating terrorists who seek to do us harm," Trump said.

While Trump confirmed reports that al-Rimi had been killed, he did not say when the U.S. operation was conducted or offer any details about how it was carried out.

Al-Rimi had said in an 18-minute video that his group was responsible for the Dec. 6 shooting at the base. He called the shooter, Saudi Air Force officer Mohammed Alshamrani, a "courageous knight" and a "hero." The shooter opened fire inside a classroom at the base, killing three people and wounding two sheriff's deputies before one of the deputies killed him. Eight others also were hurt.

The shooting focused public attention

on the presence of foreign students in American military training programs and exposed shortcomings in the screening of cadets. In January, the U.S. sent home 21 Saudi military students, saying the trainees had jihadist or anti-American sentiments on social media pages or had "contact with child pornography," including in internet chat rooms.

Trump's announcement confirmed earlier indications that al-Rimi had been killed. In late January, a suspected U.S. drone strike destroyed a building housing al-Qaida militants in eastern Yemen. Also, on Feb. 1, Trump retweeted several other tweets and media reports that seemed to offer confirmation that the strike had killed al-Rimi.

## Iraq considers deepening military ties with Russia

Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Iraq and Russia discussed prospects for deepening military coordination, Iraq's Defense Ministry said Thursday, amid a strain in Baghdad-Washington relations after a U.S. airstrike killed a top Iranian general inside Iraq.

The ministry statement followed a meeting in Baghdad between Iraqi army chief of staff Lt. Gen. Othman Al-Ghanimi and Russian Ambassador Maksim Maksimov, as well as a newly arrived defense attache.

The meeting comes during an uncertain moment in the future of Iraq-U.S. military relations, following the Jan. 3 U.S. drone strike that killed Iran's most powerful military commander, Gen. Qassem Soleimani, and Iraqi senior militia leader Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis near Baghdad airport. The attack prompted powerful Shiite parties to call for an overhaul of the existing strategic set-up between Iraq and the U.S.-led

**'Iraq still needs aerial reconnaissance planes. There are countries that have given signals to Iraq to support us or equip us with reconnaissance planes such as Russia and Iran.'**

Senior Iraqi military intelligence official

coalition.

Al-Ghanimi praised Moscow's role in the battle against Islamic State, saying they had provided "our armed forces with advanced and effective equipment and weapons that had a major role in resolving many battles," according to the ministry statement.

The statement said the sides discussed prospects for "cooperation and coordination." Both parties emphasized the importance of exchanging information and coordination to prevent the resurgence of IS.

Maksimov extended an invitation to al-Ghanimi to visit

Russia and meet with his counterpart "within the framework of strengthening cooperation between the two sides," the statement said.

There was no immediate comment from Moscow.

A senior Iraqi military intelligence official told The Associated Press that Russia, among other countries, has come forward to offer military support in the wake of fraught U.S.-Iraq relations following Soleimani's killing.

"Iraq still needs aerial reconnaissance planes. There are countries that have given signals to Iraq to support us

or equip us with reconnaissance planes such as Russia and Iran," said the official, who requested anonymity because of the sensitive nature of the information.

In response to the drone strike that killed Soleimani, Iraq's Parliament passed a non-binding resolution urging a U.S. troop withdrawal, and then caretaker Prime Minister Adel Abdul-Mahdi openly called for a troop withdrawal.

Since then, Iraqi leaders have scaled back the saber-rattling rhetoric. But behind closed doors, the bitterness has poisoned the partnership.

Senior Iraqi military officials told AP this week that Iraq told its military not to seek assistance from the U.S.-led coalition in joint operations targeting the Islamic State group and to minimize cooperation. Marine Gen. Frank McKenzie, the top U.S. commander in the Middle East, acknowledged recently that relations with Iraq were "in a period of turbulence."

## Russia blames Israel after airliner evades Syrian missiles, diverts

*The Washington Post*

MOSCOW — An Airbus A320 jet carrying 172 passengers was nearly shot down on its approach to the Syrian capital, Damascus, shortly after 2 a.m. Thursday after Syria fired anti-aircraft missiles in response to an attack, according to a Russian Defense Ministry spokesman, Russian news agencies reported Friday.

Russia accused the Israeli air force of using the passenger plane as a shield from Syrian air defenses, mirroring an incident in 2018 in which Syrian forces accidentally shot down a Russian reconnaissance plane, killing 15 Russian service members.

Thursday's incident underlined the continued danger that Israel's airstrikes in Syria, targeting what Israeli officials claim are Iranian assets, could spiral into a major international confrontation.

The plane was diverted to Russia's nearby Hemeimeem air base and landed safely, Russian Defense Ministry spokesman Igor Konashenkov said. He did not name the airliner that was flying from Tehran to Damascus, but information from flight tracker Flight Radar indicated it was likely a Syrian Cham Wings aircraft.

On Thursday, Israeli warplanes launched airstrikes at targets in southern Syria, according to Syrian state media. Konashenkov said the incident followed airstrikes by four Israeli F-16 fighter jets.

The incident comes a month after Iran shot down a Ukrainian passenger jet after takeoff from Tehran, killing 176 people.

The Ukrainian jet was hit by an air defense battery of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps in the tense hours after Iran carried out retaliatory missile strikes against U.S. positions in Iraq after the United States killed a senior Iranian commander, Qassem Soleimani, in Baghdad.

Konashenkov said Israeli fighter jets fired eight missiles at targets near Damascus early Thursday, and Syrian forces fired anti-aircraft missile defense systems.

"It was purely thanks to the prompt actions of air traffic controllers at Damascus airport and the effective operation of the automated air traffic control system that the Airbus 320 passenger plane was promptly rerouted from the Syrian air defense area of engagement and safely landed at the nearest reserve airfield," he said.

Konashenkov said the use of civilian aircraft as shields to deter Syrian forces from responding to attacks was "becoming a signature feature of the Israeli air force."

The Israel Defense Forces have confirmed recently that they have launched attacks in Syria to prevent Iran from entrenching there.

## Syrians enter rebel town; Turkey sends more troops

*Associated Press*

BEIRUT — Government troops entered a strategic town in Syria's last rebel stronghold Thursday after fierce clashes with opposition fighters, even as Turkey sent reinforcements seeking to curtail the offensive, Syrian state media reported.

The push by President Bashar Assad's forces into towns and villages in the northwestern Idlib province has caused the displacement of more than a half million people in just over two months, compounding a humanitarian disaster in the region. It has also angered Turkey and risked a military confrontation between Turkish and Syrian troops.

The town of Saraqeb, near the Turkish border, has been at the center of intense fighting for days. Opposition fighters pushed out government soldiers who entered it Wednesday, while Turkey sent in new reinforcements Thursday and threatened to use force to compel the Syrian forces to retreat by the end of the month.

The town sits at the intersection of highways linking the capital Damascus to the north, and the country's west and east. State news agency SANA and state-run Al-Ikhbariya TV said Syrian army units entered the town before nightfall and were combing it for remaining fighters and explosives. The Syrian army had earlier besieged the town and at least four Turkish military posts set up to protect Saraqeb against the advance were also besieged.

In Moscow, Russia's Foreign Ministry announced that Russian soldiers had been killed in a northern Syrian province alongside Turkish servicemen, without saying when the incident occurred or how many were killed. Russia backs Assad's forces; Turkey supports insurgents fighting his government.

## Relationship might affect soldier's case

BY STEVE BEYNON

*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — An Army staff sergeant convicted for assault could get a new court-martial after the judge overseeing his case was discovered to have had an "intimate relationship" with the lead prosecutor's wife, according to court documents.

The Army Court of Criminal Appeals, an eight-judge panel, unanimously ruled Army Lt. Col. Richard Henry, a married Fort Benning, Ga., military judge, was disqualified from the case because of his "personal and emotionally intimate relationship" with the wife of the judge advocate who was prosecuting Staff Sgt. Tony Springer, who was convicted on two counts of assault in December 2017.

Springer was bumped down in rank to E-4, which also affects pay, and received a bad conduct discharge.

The appeals court found Henry's relationship with the prosecutor's wife, identified in court documents as "Mrs. KC," made the appearance of impartiality impossible. The opinion does not say explicitly the relationship was sexual. However, since the two met in October 2016, they would text all hours of the night, do yoga together and frequently go out to eat. Henry would often allow Mrs. KC to use the courthouse deliberation room to study for her master's degree, according to court documents.

"The only way to remedy ... Henry's failure to disqualify himself in this case is to set aside the findings and the sentence and authorize a rehearing," the opinion states.

"The texting would occur at all hours, to include well into the night after Capt. AC [the prosecutor] and Mrs. KC retired to bed," court documents read.

In April 2018, Capt. AC confronted Mrs. KC and accused her of having an affair with Henry. She deleted all her text messages with Henry, claiming the messages contained information her husband should not know as an attorney practicing before Henry. In the same month, Capt. AC reported the relationship to his change of command, which led to the removal of Henry from the bench the same month.

The appeals court said Henry likely knew the relationship was inappropriate given his position and he should have disclosed the "intimate" relationship with Ms. KC or recused himself from the case.

# Dems confront post-impeachment options

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Donald Trump's impeachment ended with a reminder of why House Speaker Nancy Pelosi resisted the idea for so long — an acquittal everyone saw coming, followed by a bombastic presidential victory lap and a bump in his poll numbers just as the 2020 campaign officially began.

Now Democrats have to decide how to navigate the legislative and political landscape that they've helped reshape.

Pelosi's nationally televised ripping of her copy of Trump's State of the Union address Tuesday night underscored the acrid atmosphere that will make partisan cooperation on any issue difficult. Major legislative compromises were always going to be hard this election year, but the impeachment fight only deepened partisan bitterness and made progress less likely.

"Because we have to," No. 2 House Democratic leader Steny Hoyer of Maryland

said when asked how Congress and Trump could cooperate on health care and other issues. He added, "I'd be foolish to be optimistic because we have not done that so far."

Democrats must also decide how vigorously to continue investigations, including into impeachment's focus: Trump's effort to pressure Ukraine's leaders to bolster his reelection by seeking dirt on rival Joe Biden. The GOP-controlled Senate acquitted Trump on Wednesday of both articles of impeachment, with Utah Sen. Mitt Romney the sole lawmaker defying party lines.

Former White House national security adviser John Bolton could still have damaging information about Trump and has expressed a willingness to testify if subpoenaed. House Judiciary Committee Chairman Jerrold Nadler, D-N.Y., told reporters Wednesday that House panels would likely summon Bolton and pursue other Trump probes as well.

"When you have a lawless president, you

have to bring that to the fore, you have to spotlight that," Nadler said.

Even as they consider the path ahead, neither Pelosi nor Democrats controlling the House are second-guessing their decision to impeach Trump.

Pelosi stood as a bulwark against impeachment for months as pro-impeachment sentiment rose steadily in her caucus, but when Trump's dealings with Ukraine came to light in September, the floodgates were forced open.

"Once Ukraine happened, we had no choice but to proceed," said Rep. Peter Welch, D-Vt.

"And had we not (acted)," Welch added, "there would have been a huge price to pay politically."

While that's a popular view with Democrats' dominant liberal wing, many think an overemphasis on Trump investigations risks feeding the Republican narrative that overreaching Democrats are obsessed with pursuing him.

## White House weighs plan to dismiss Lt. Col. Vindman

Bloomberg News

WASHINGTON — The White House is weighing a plan to dismiss Alexander Vindman from the National Security Council after he testified in President Donald Trump's impeachment inquiry, preparing to position the move as part of a broader effort to shrink the foreign policy bureaucracy, two people familiar with the matter said.

Any moves would come after the Senate on Wednesday acquitted Trump on a near

party-line vote at the conclusion of the two-week impeachment trial. The White House intends to portray any house-cleaning as part of a downsizing of the NSC staff, not retaliation, according to the people.

Yet some of the officials being targeted for removal from the NSC would be reassigned because they are perceived as being disloyal to the president, three people familiar with the matter said on condition of anonymity owing to the sensitivity of personnel moves.

Senior officials were informed Thursday that some staff members would be leaving the White House, the people added. The moves have been in the works since at least last week and could come as soon as Friday.

The departure of Vindman, a decorated Army lieutenant colonel, who raised the alarm over the president's July 25 telephone call with Ukraine's leader, could trigger objections from Democrats and possibly some Republicans.

## Associated Press unable to declare Iowa caucus winner

Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa — The Associated Press said Thursday that it is unable to declare a winner of Iowa's Democratic caucuses.

Following the Iowa Democratic Party's release of new results late Thursday night, former South Bend, Ind., Mayor Pete Buttigieg leads Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders by two state delegate equivalents out of 2,152 counted. That is a margin of 0.09 percentage points.

However, there is evidence the party has not accurately tabulated some of its results, including those released late Thursday that the party reported as complete. The AP's tabulation of the party's results are at 99%

of precincts reporting, with data missing from one of 1,765 precincts, among other issues.

Further, even as the Iowa Democratic Party's effort to complete its tabulation of the caucus results continued Thursday, Democratic National Committee Chairman Tom Perez asked the Iowa Democratic Party to conduct a recanvass. That is not a recount, but rather a check of the vote count to ensure the results were added correctly.

Perez sought the recanvass following days of uncertainty about the results reported by the Iowa Democratic Party, which includes problems with the mobile phone app used by the party to collect re-

sults from caucus sites.

The Iowa Democratic Party issued a statement that said it would conduct a recanvass if one was requested by one of the candidates.

"The Associated Press calls a race when there is a clear indication of a winner. Because of a tight margin between former Mayor Pete Buttigieg and Sen. Bernie Sanders and the irregularities in this year's caucus process, it is not possible to determine a winner at this point," said Sally Buzbee, AP's senior vice president and executive editor.

The AP will continue to monitor the race, as well as the results of any potential recanvass or recount.

## Severe storms wreak havoc in eastern US

Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — More than 300,000 homes and businesses in the southeastern United States were without power early Friday after a powerful storm raked the region. At least five people were killed.

North Carolina had the most customers without electricity on Friday, followed by Pennsylvania, according to poweroutages.us. The outages matched states that were under high wind and winter weather advisories issued by the National Weather Service.

Forecasters warned that the storm system could bring gusts of 50 mph to 60 mph from the Carolinas into New England, potentially toppling rain-soaked trees and making driving hazardous.

As much as four inches of snow fell overnight in Ohio, part of a band of snowy weather stretching from Tennessee to Maine. Blowing snow contributed to several accidents in the Akron area, and the Ohio Department of Transportation urged people to make room for nearly 1,300 state crews working to improve the icy conditions.

The weather destroyed mobile homes in Mississippi, Alabama and Florida, caused mudslides in Tennessee and Kentucky and flooded communities that shoulder waterways across the Appalachian region. Rain kept falling over a path of splintered trees and sagging power lines that stretched from Louisiana into Virginia.

School districts canceled classes in state after state as bad weather rolled through.

Up to 8 inches of snow was predicted in West Virginia, while Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam declared a state of emergency because of heavy rains and extreme flooding.

Authorities confirmed five storm-related fatalities, in Alabama, South Carolina, North Carolina and Tennessee.

# Death of doctor who warned of virus in China stirs fury

Associated Press

BEIJING — The death of a young doctor who was reprimanded for warning about China's coronavirus triggered an outpouring Friday of praise for him and fury that communist authorities put politics above public safety.

In death, Dr. Li Wenliang became the face of simmering anger at the ruling Communist Party's controls over information and complaints that officials lie about or hide disease outbreaks, chemical spills, dangerous consumer products or financial frauds.

The 34-year-old ophthalmologist died overnight at Wuhan Central Hospital, where he worked and likely contracted the virus while treating patients in the early days of the outbreak.

"A hero who released information about Wuhan's epidemic in the early stage, Dr. Li Wenliang is immortal," the China Center for Disease Control's chief scientist, Zeng Guang, wrote on the Sina Weibo microblog service.

Police in December had reprimanded eight doctors including Li for warning friends on social media about the emerging threat. China's supreme court later criticized the police, but the ruling party has tightened its grip on information about the outbreak.

Weibo users have left hundreds of thousands of messages below Li's last post.

A post by one of Li's co-workers, an emergency room nurse, said the freezing Wuhan weather was "as gloomy as my mood."

"To you, we are angels and so strong. But how strong a heart can watch the people around me fall one by one without being shocked?" wrote Li Mengping on her verified account.

Others placed blame for the deaths on Chinese officials, not an animal species from where the virus might have spread, and said those who made

## 41 new cases of virus confirmed on cruise ship

Associated Press

BEIJING — Japan on Friday reported 41 new cases of a virus on a quarantined cruise ship and turned away another luxury liner while the death toll in mainland China rose to 636.

The outbreak has now infected more than 31,400 people worldwide.

Two docked cruise ships with thousands of passengers and crew members remained under 14-day quarantines in Hong Kong and Japan.

Before Friday's 41 confirmed cases, 20 infected passengers were escorted off the Diamond Princess at Yokohama near Tokyo. About 3,700 people have been confined aboard the ship. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe announced Thursday

that Japan will deny entry of foreign passengers on another cruise ship — Holland America's cruise ship Westerdam, on its way to Okinawa from Hong Kong — because of suspected virus patients found on board. The Seattle-based operator denied anyone had the virus.

Abe said the new immigration policy takes effect Friday to ensure border control to prevent the disease from entering and spreading further into Japan.

The ship with more than 2,000 people was currently near Ishigaki, one of Okinawa's outer islands, and was seeking another port, said Overseas Travel Agency official Mie Matsubara.

In Bayonne, N.J., four passengers were taken to a hospital after their cruise ship arrived Friday.

trouble for the doctor should face consequences. The most pointed online comments were quickly deleted by censors.

The ruling party has faced similar accusations of bungling or thuggish behavior following previous disasters. They include the 2003 outbreak of severe acute respiratory syndrome, a 2005 chemical spill that disrupted water supplies to millions of people in China's northeast, sales of tainted milk that sickened thousands of children and the failure of private finance companies after the global economic crisis.

In each case, officials were accused of trying to conceal or delay the release of information members of the public said that they needed to protect themselves.

The party often responds by

allowing the public to vent temporarily, then uses its control of media and the internet to stifle criticism. Critics who persist can be jailed on vague charges of spreading rumors or making trouble.

On the streets of Beijing, the capital, residents expressed sadness and said that China should learn from Li.

"He is such a nice person, but still didn't pull through," said Ning Yanqing. "Those left do not dare to speak out. Alas, I don't know what to say."

Some online comments Friday hinted at broader dissatisfaction with the party and Chinese President Xi Jinping, who has tightened controls on society since taking power in 2012.

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

### 3 dogs captured after biting 12 people

**NJ** LITTLE EGG HARBOR TOWNSHIP — Authorities were holding three dogs that they said have terrorized a southern New Jersey neighborhood and bitten at least 12 people over four months.

The latest attack occurred in the area of Lake Winnepesaukee Drive when police said a 69-year-old woman and a 40-year-old man sustained multiple bites. Six residents were bitten as officers and residents frantically attempted to contain the dogs, police said.

A video released by police showed a man fending off the dogs with a pole.

### Video shows thief take SUV with child inside

**DC** WASHINGTON — A thief caught on surveillance video stole a mother's vehicle while she was pumping gas and her child was sitting in the back seat.

The mother was dragged while trying to stop the thief in Washington, D.C., news outlets reported. Video appeared to show a man sneak into the SUV and drive away as the mother tried to stop the thief.

Elroy Jacobs told news outlets he witnessed the woman being dragged for about a block before she was run over. He said he chased the vehicle and found the child still inside after the SUV was abandoned.

It's unclear whether the mother was injured.

### Man claims coronavirus, sprays disinfectant

**IL** JOLIET — Police are searching for a man who caused thousands of dollars of damage in a Walmart in subur-

ban Chicago by spraying disinfectant inside the store while wearing a surgical mask and a sign on his back declaring that he has the deadly coronavirus.

Two men apparently in their 20s walked into the store in Joliet. One of them put on the yellow surgical mask and started spraying Lysol on clothing, produce and health and beauty items, causing nearly \$10,000 in damage, police said.

"He was telling everyone the same thing, that he was protecting them from the virus," Tony Prokes, a customer, told WLS-TV in Chicago. The man wore a homemade sign on his back that read, "Caution I have the Coronavirus."

The apparent prank comes amid growing worldwide concern about the virus that has killed hundreds of people, most of them in China, and sickened more than 20,000 around the world.

### Psych hospital escapee charged with car theft

**MN** ANOKA — An escapee from a state-operated psychiatric hospital is charged with stealing a police squad car in Anoka County.

Mattu Chuol, 23, left the Anoka Metro Regional Treatment Center without permission, according to prosecutors.

Officers arrived and found Chuol walking along a sidewalk. The Star Tribune said he spotted the squad car and took off.

One officer got out of her squad and began pursuing Chuol. Authorities said that's when he jumped into her car and took off. A few blocks later he stopped in the middle of the road and surrendered.

Chuol is charged in Anoka County District Court with felony vehicle theft.

### Sick monk seal has an infection spread by cats

**HI** HONOLULU — A sick Hawaiian monk seal under the care of wildlife scientists is suffering from a parasitic infection often spread via feral cat feces, officials said.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration officials determined that the seal is suffering from toxoplasmosis, The Honolulu Star-Tribune reported.

The female seal, known as Pohaku, was taken from Ko Olina on Oahu to the agency for monitoring after reports she was "logging," or lethargically floating on the water.

There are an estimated 50,000 to 300,000 feral cats on Oahu and they are a primary source of toxoplasmosis, a parasite that reproduces in the digestive system of cats, the agency said on its website.

### Woman stuns husband with Taser during fight

**FL** CLEARWATER — A Florida woman responded to her husband's request for a separation by shocking him with a stun gun, authorities said.

Pamela Carr, 69, was arrested at her Clearwater mobile home and charged with aggravated domestic battery, a Pinellas County Sheriff's Office report said.

Carr and her husband got into an argument after he told her he wanted to end their marriage of nine years, the report said. At some point, Carr pulled out a Taser and stunned her husband several times at close range, rather than shooting him with barbed darts, investigators said.

Deputies said Carr admitted to stunning her husband but claimed she acted in self-defense.

Carr was released from jail and ordered to stay away from her husband.

### Streets closed after old artillery shell found

**SC** CHARLESTON — Several downtown streets in South Carolina's largest city were closed after construction crews found an old artillery shell, police said.

The crews called 911 to report the shell in downtown Charleston, just over a block from the Old Slave Mart where dozens of vendors sell merchandise, Charleston police said. The police department called the U.S. Air Force to dispose of the shell and closed several roads as a precaution.

The shell appears to be newer than the Civil War, but investigators aren't exactly sure when it was made, police spokesman Charles Francis said in a statement.

### Man charged after black cemetery defaced

**LA** BATON ROUGE — A Louisiana man has been arrested and accused of vandalizing and tagging a historic African American cemetery.

Baton Rouge police told news outlets Brandon Hayes, 31, was arrested and charged with 14 counts of criminal damage to property by defacing and one count of criminal damage of historic landmarks.

Police said Hayes vandalized several buildings in Mid City and a sign in Sweet Olive Cemetery, which was founded in 1850. Sweet Olive is the first cemetery for black residents incorporated in Baton Rouge, news outlets reported.

A quick cleanup effort removed red and black spray paint from the cemetery sign.

From wire reports

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# Gonzaga: International House of Hoops

Associated Press

SPOKANE, Wash. — Assistant coach Tommy Lloyd has been to so many countries looking for the best international talent during his 19 seasons on the Gonzaga staff. So many passport books filled. So many stamps.

“I had a cool one from Zimbabwe. They had a sticker and you had to pay \$20 cash when you got in the country in U.S. dollars. That’s how crazy it was,” Lloyd said. “That’s going back 20 years or something.”

Today the travel is less extensive, a little less exotic for Lloyd. But the influence of international players on Gonzaga’s roster remains strong.

Going back to the days when Ronny Turiaf was one of the best players in the country, there’s always been a bit of an international flavor to the Bulldogs’ roster. Countries like Martinique, Brazil, Germany, Russia and France — to name a select few — have had some of their best end up playing in little Spokane, Wash., for the school with the funny-sounding name.

But this year, with the Zags ranked No. 2 in the country heading into this weekend’s game against Saint Mary’s, takes the top spot. Six players from five different countries are on the roster. The dominant conversation inside the palatial locker room could be any mix of languages all bonded together by a game that has become far more international.

“This was kind of born out of necessity. We wanted to keep growing the program

and we needed to recruit at a higher level,” Lloyd said. “Eastern Washington is a great place, but it’s not necessarily a hotbed for basketball talent. So we had to think outside the box, so we started investing time and resources and developing relationships overseas.”

Those relationships have yielded a bounty of stars. It’s started in the early 2000s with Turiaf, the gregarious forward from Martinique who has become an ambassador for the school in basketball circles. Other standouts like J.P. Batista (Brazil), Przemek Karnowski (Poland), Elias Harris (Germany), Domantas Sabonis (Lithuania) and Rui Hachimura (Japan) have also cycled through Spokane.

And that list doesn’t include the large number of Canadians like Robert Sacre, Kevin Pangos and Kelly Olynyk.

This year’s group includes leading scorer Filip Petrushev of Serbia. Starters Killian Tillie and Joel Ayayi make up the French contingent. Martynas Arlauskas (Lithuania), Pavel Zakharov (Russia) and Oumar Ballo (Mali) are on the Bulldogs’ bench.

Petrusev is averaging 17 points per game and had a career-high 31 points last week against Santa Clara.

“I’ve changed a lot of teams, and being the foreign kid and being accepted like this and just everybody welcoming me like this, it’s never happened,” said Petrushev, who grew up in Serbia before finishing his high school career playing in Florida. “It

was the quickest settle in for me. The guys made it look like I had been here a year before I came. I think the culture here — a lot of international guys so we can relate to each other — but the domestic guys understand us, too, and they do an amazing job of just bringing us into their culture.”

Petrusev was drawn to Gonzaga by its success developing post players for the NBA, like Olynyk and Sabonis in recent years.

Ayayi first became aware of Gonzaga when Tillie committed to joining the Zags. The two are a couple of years apart but attended the same academy in France.

“I just knew it was in a small city up there in the cold,” Ayayi said pointing and laughing.

Ayayi has developed at Gonzaga. He averaged just 5.6 minutes per game as a redshirt freshman last season. This year, he is playing nearly 30 minutes per night, averaging 11.2 points and is second on the team in rebounding.

“At the beginning people think it’s harder on the court. But you come here and struggle on the court, it’s almost better than off the court. Because off the court there are so many things you have to figure out,” Ayayi said. “You may really struggle in practice, but you better enjoy it because when you get out of practice it’s worse. You have the language barrier, you have so many things at school, all those little new things to get used to. ... But Tommy always makes sure everyone is feeling great.”

## Top 25 roundup

### Petrusev scores 21 as Zags top Loyola Marymount

Associated Press

SPOKANE, Wash. — Filip Petrushev scored 21 points as No. 2 Gonzaga beat Loyola Marymount 85-67 on Thursday night for its 16th consecutive victory.

Admon Gilder and Drew Timme each scored 17 points for Gonzaga (24-1, 10-0 West Coast Conference), which also won its 36th consecutive home game, the longest active streak in the nation. Five Zags scored in double figures.

Eli Scott scored 15 and Ivan Alipiev 12 for Loyola Marymount (8-16, 2-8), which lost its fourth game in a row and 23rd straight to Gonzaga.

This win was relatively easy after Gonzaga was tested in an 83-79 win at San Francisco last weekend.

**No. 23 Arizona 85, USC 80:** Nico Mannion scored 20 points and Zeke Nnaji and

Josh Green each added 18 and the Wildcats held on for a win over the visiting Trojans.

Arizona (16-6, 6-3 Pac-12) has won five of its past six and was in full control for most of this one until the final minutes.

The Wildcats led by as many as 20 during the second half, pushing to a 63-43 advantage with 12:55 remaining. USC slowly chipped away and pulled within 83-80 with five seconds left on a three-pointer by Jonah Mathews, but Mannion responded with a pair of free throws to stop the rally.

USC (17-6, 6-4) has lost back-to-back games for the first time this season. The Trojans were led by Onyeka Okongwu with 23 points. Daniel Utomi added 22 points.

**No. 24 Colorado 71, California 65:** Tyler Bey scored a season-high 21 points, McKinley Wright IV had 17 points and the host Buffaloes made key free throws down

the stretch to beat the Golden Bears.

D’Shawn Schwartz added 14 points for Colorado (18-5, 7-3 Pac-12), which won for the fourth time in five games.

Matt Bradley had 17 points to lead Cal (10-12, 4-5), which remained winless away from its home court, dropping to 0-6 on the road and 0-3 on neutral courts this season.

**No. 25 Houston 75, Tulane 62:** Caleb Mills scored 18 points, Quentin Grimes added 15, and the host Cougars held off the Green Wave.

Nate Hinton added 12 points, 12 rebounds and seven assists for Houston (18-5, 8-2 American). The Cougars bounced back after losing to Cincinnati 64-62 on Saturday. Houston is 15-0 after a loss over the last three seasons.

Teshaun Hightown had 17 points to lead the Green Wave (10-12, 2-8).

# Flurry of deals at NBA trade deadline

Associated Press

MIAMI — Most of the top NBA playoff contenders stayed out of the down-to-the-wire frenzy at the trade deadline.

Miami and the Los Angeles Clippers beefed up instead.

And a slew of other teams — including the Golden State Warriors — made moves with short-term finances and long-term ramifications in mind.

The NBA's 3 p.m. EST deadline Thursday for trades to be consummated did not arrive quietly, with a flurry of deals getting struck in the final hour and at least one other notable move falling apart before reaching the finish line. Deals that included at least 41 players and 15 future draft picks were struck on either Wednesday or Thursday — the biggest move likely being the one Thursday that saw Andrew Wiggins going from Minnesota to the Warriors so D'Angelo Russell could leave Golden State finally and

be paired with his good friend Karl-Anthony Towns with the Timberwolves.

Marcus Morris leaves New York for Los Angeles, going from the woebegone Knicks to the title-hoping Clippers — who added a piece many teams wanted.

The rest of that deal:

The Knicks got Moe Harkless, a first-round pick this year, a second-round pick next year and a first-round pick swap option in 2021 as well from the Clippers. The Clippers also sent Jerome Robinson to Washington for Isaiah Thomas — who is not staying with Los Angeles and will become a free agent option for teams shortly, the latest twist in a career that saw him as an All-Star averaging 29 points just three years ago but was derailed by injury and a long recovery.

Three-time champion Andre Iguodala is ending his exile after not playing for Memphis

at all this season and is going to join the Heat along with Jae Crowder and Solomon Hill, with Miami sending three players — Justise Winslow, Dion Waiters and James Johnson — who've combined to score a mere 254 points this season — out in the deal. Johnson was flipped by the Grizzlies to Minnesota for Gorgui Dieng.

NBA rebounding leader Andre Drummond got moved by Detroit to Cleveland, then took to Twitter to express his dismay with the trade process.

"If there's one thing I learned about the NBA, there's no friends or loyalty," Drummond wrote. "I've given my heart and soul to the Pistons, and to be have this happen with no heads up makes me realize even more that this is just a business! I love you Detroit ..."

Some of the other deals:

■ Washington got Shabazz Napier from Denver for guard Jordan McRae. Napier was

acquired by the Nuggets on Wednesday in the 12-player, four-team deal.

■ Philadelphia got Alec Burks and Glenn Robinson III from Golden State for three second-round picks (this year's from Dallas, next year's from Denver and 2022's from Toronto).

■ Atlanta got forward/center Skal Labissiere and cash from Portland for a heavily protected 2024 second-round pick. The Hawks also landed Derrick Walton Jr. and cash from the Los Angeles Clippers for their heavily protected 2022 second-round pick.

■ Orlando acquired James Ennis from Philadelphia for the Lakers' second-round pick this year, then waived forward Amile Jefferson.

■ Memphis got forward Jordan Bell from Houston for forward Bruno Caboclo. The teams also agreed to swap second-round picks in 2023.

## NBA roundup

### Rockets use another version of small ball to top Lakers

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Russell Westbrook scored 41 points and Robert Covington hit two clutch late three-pointers while getting 14 points and eight rebounds in his auspicious Rockets debut, leading Houston to a 121-111 victory over the Los Angeles Lakers on Thursday night.

James Harden managed just 14 points while the Rockets unveiled the latest version of their commitment to small ball by not playing anybody taller than 6-foot-7 against the hulking Lakers.

Anthony Davis and the Lakers capitalized inside, but Houston still rallied from a late four-point deficit and ended the game on a 19-5 surge highlighted by two of Covington's four three-pointers. The veteran shooter was acquired from

Minnesota on Wednesday in a four-team trade.

Davis had 32 points and 13 rebounds, and LeBron James had 18 points, 15 assists and nine rebounds in a meeting of first-place teams with sharply contrasting approaches.

Harden took just 10 shots in his follow-up to back-to-back 40-point games, but Westbrook returned from a one-game absence with a sprained thumb and had a huge performance in the Rockets' fourth straight win.

Houston gave up big man Clint Capela to acquire Covington, leaving the club with an uncommonly small roster even by the Rockets' standards. They still have 7-footers Tyson Chandler and Isaiah Hartenstein on the roster, but neither got playing time at Staples Center.

Danuel House Jr., who is listed at 6-foot-6, was the tallest

player in the Rockets' starting lineup.

**Bucks 112, 76ers 101:** Giannis Antetokounmpo had 36 points and 20 rebounds and host Milwaukee used a strong defensive effort to beat Philadelphia.

Antetokounmpo had 30-plus points and 15-plus rebounds for the fifth straight game and the 14th time this season.

**Trail Blazers 125, Spurs 117:** Damian Lillard had 26 points and 10 assists, Hassan Whiteside had 17 points and tied a season-high with 23 rebounds, and host Portland beat San Antonio.

The Blazers got a major boost off their bench from Gary Trent Jr., who scored 18 points. Trent's points late were important as he hit four three-pointers and scored 12 points in the fourth quarter as Portland rallied from a 92-86 deficit.

**Pelicans 125, Bulls 119:** Zion Williamson scored 21, JJ Redick added 18 points and visiting New Orleans hung on to beat Chicago.

Williamson had nine points as New Orleans outscored Chicago 31-19 in the third quarter to break open the game. The Pelicans led by as many as 27 points and withstood a big run down the stretch by the Bulls' backups to come away with the win after back-to-back losses.

**Knicks 105, Magic 103:** Julius Randle scored 22 points, Taj Gibson had 19 and host New York beat Orlando for its third straight victory.

Despite trading leading scorer Marcus Morris to the Clippers earlier in the day, the Knicks rallied from 10 down in the fourth quarter to match their longest winning streak of the season.

# Taylor nabs early lead at Pebble Beach

Associated Press

PEBBLE BEACH, Calif. — Nick Taylor opened with an eagle, closed with two birdies and made a gorgeous day feel even better with an 8-under 63 at Monterey Peninsula that gave him the lead Thursday in the AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am.

Most of the interest over three courses in the rotation was at Spyglass Hill, which featured Dustin Johnson and Phil Mickelson, along with five NFL quarterbacks that included Peyton Manning and his recently retired brother, Eli.

The iconic scenery is at Pebble Beach, especially when the surf turns a turquoise hue under so much sunshine.

Taylor went about his business quietly, and most

effectively.

Starting on the back nine at Monterey Peninsula, with a chilly breeze at his back, he hit 4-iron to a back pin that settled 4 feet away for an eagle, hit 3-iron out of the rough for a two-putt birdie on the par-5 16th and knew he was playing well when he hit 4-iron to 10 feet on the first hole, a 495-yard par 4 that feels even longer when the air is cold at sea level.

Better still was the finish — a 5-iron back toward the ocean to 5 feet, and then a wind-aided 3-iron from 240 yards on a back tee he had never seen to 20 feet.

“A nice start,” Taylor said, referring to his 4-iron that set up eagle and the 63 that matched his low round on the tour. “The weather helps out. If it’s raining, it’s windy, five-and-a-half

hours is a long round. But we were very relaxed today, joked all day, and I felt like the mood was great.”

He led by two shots to par over Patrick Cantlay (Spyglass) and Chase Seiffert (Pebble Beach), who each had a 6-under 66.

Defending champion Mickelson, whose third-place finish in Saudi Arabia last week was his best result in a year, was slightly disappointed with his 68 at Spyglass because of how well he felt he hit it off the tee.

“I drove it like a stallion,” said Mickelson, a phrase he once used in describing his play at the \$9 million pay-per-view match he won against Tiger Woods in Las Vegas.

Cantlay made nine birdies at Spyglass and wasn’t even the best putter in his group. Some of his best views of this

stunning day along the rugged coastline was watching champion surfer Kelly Slater on the greens, not in the pipe.

“He looked like the best putter on tour today,” Cantlay said of his amateur partner.

Mickelson ultimately was happy to be in range after his 68, though it wasn’t looking all that great when he failed to birdie any of the par 5s at Spyglass and had gone 10 holes without a birdie until birdies on his last three holes.

“I let a lot of opportunities slide,” he said. “But I shot a 4-under-par round and it’s not going to hurt me.”

The hurt belonged to David Duval, whose scorecard contained a 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8. He made one birdie in his round of 84.

## NHL roundup

# Vasilevskiy sharp again as Bolts turn back Penguins

Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — Steven Stamkos and Nikita Kucherov scored, Andre Vasilevskiy made 29 saves and the Tampa Bay Lightning beat the Pittsburgh Penguins 4-2 Thursday night.

Vasilevskiy improved to 15-0-2 in his past 17 starts to set a franchise record for consecutive games without a regulation loss.

“Some of those saves he makes are ridiculous,” said defenseman Victor Hedman, who finished with three assists. “Sometimes you don’t expect to see those out of him but at the same time you are not surprised. He’s never out of a play, and so quick. He’s just unbelievable.”

Tampa Bay won its eighth consecutive game at home.

Mikhail Sergachev and Anthony Cirelli also scored for Tampa Bay, which has won 18 of its past 21 games. Stamkos and Kucherov each got their 25th

goals of the season, with Kucherov scoring an empty-netter.

Evgeni Malkin and John Marino scored for Pittsburgh. Matt Murray finished with 25 saves.

The Penguins had 1:34 of a 5-on-3 power play in the third period but failed to find the tying goal.

“I think they’re important times in games,” Pittsburgh captain Sidney Crosby said. “I think we’ve got to make time that when we get an opportunity like that and time like that we need to settle down and make some plays.”

Sergachev put Tampa Bay up 1-0 with a wrist shot from the right circle that deflected off the stick of Pittsburgh’s Sam Lafferty and bounced down and through Murray’s legs at 9:04 of the first period.

Stamkos made it 2-0 at 12:55 after Kucherov’s backcheck sprung a 2-on-1 chance the other way with Point and Stamkos playing give-and-go before Stamkos lifted a shot over Mur-

ray. Stamkos and Kucherov extended their respective points streaks to nine games.

**Golden Knights 7, Panthers 2:** Mark Stone scored two goals and had three assists, Marc-Andre Fleury recorded the 460th win of his career and visiting Vegas topped Florida.

**Red Wings 4, Sabres 3 (SO):** Dylan Larkin scored twice and converted one of his team’s two shootout goals, and visiting Detroit snapped a nine-game skid with a win over Buffalo.

**Devils 5, Flyers 0:** Mackenzie Blackwood stopped 46 shots for his second shutout of the season, and Miles Wood scored twice in visiting New Jersey’s victory over Philadelphia.

**Islanders 5, Kings 3:** Rookie Kieffer Bellows scored his first two NHL goals to help host New York rally past last-place Los Angeles.

**Canadiens 3, Ducks 2 (OT):** Jeff Petry scored 25 seconds into overtime to give host Montreal the win over Anaheim.

**Wild 4, Canucks 2:** Kevin

Fiala and Brad Hunt each had a goal and an assist as part of their team’s three-goal first period and host Minnesota beat Vancouver.

**Avalanche 4, Senators 1:** Cale Makar had a goal and an assist to lead visiting Colorado to its fifth win in its last six games.

**Jets 4, Blues 2:** Andrew Copp broke a third-period tie and Connor Hellebuyck made 35 saves for visiting Winnipeg. Patrik Laine, Jansen Harkins and Nikolaj Ehlers also scored for the Blues in the win.

**Hurricanes 5, Coyotes 3:** Andrei Svechnikov and Sebastian Aho each scored two goals and had one assist to lead visiting Carolina past Arizona.

**Predators 3, Flames 2:** Mikael Granlund had a goal and an assist to lead visiting Nashville over Calgary.

**Sharks 6, Oilers 3:** Timo Meier had two goals and an assist and visiting San Jose battled back for a victory over Edmonton.