

Zelenskyy: Ukraine can't rely on US aid

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

MUNICH, Germany — The United States can no longer be relied on to ensure security in Europe, which is at risk of being pulled apart by Russia without a continent-wide military force of its own, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Saturday.

Zelenskyy, addressing global leaders at a security conference in Munich, warned his European counterparts that Russia is building up a military capable of striking out beyond Ukraine.

"Maybe it's meant for you," Zelenskyy said.

The Ukrainian leader said in a wide-ranging speech that the Trump administration was sidelining European countries as Washington pursues a peace deal with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

As he entered the Bayerischer Hof hotel in Munich, Zelenskyy was greeted with a rousing standing ovation. And at the end of his nearly 30-minute talk the crowd rose to their feet again.

Zelenskyy's call for European unity in the face of Russian aggression came one day after Vice President JD Vance excoriated Europe in a speech that suggested allies were backsliding on democracy and free speech. Leaders, including those in Germany, pushed back on Vance, saying he was out of line.

"That is not done, certainly not among friends and allies," German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said Saturday. "Where our democracy goes from here is for us to decide."

Zelenskyy said Vance made clear that "the old relationship between Europe and America" was ending.

"From now on, things will be different, and Europe needs to adjust to that," Zelenskyy said.

He said it is possible that the United States won't come to Europe's defense if attacked.

"An army of Europe, I really believe that time has come. The Armed Forces of Europe must be created," he said.

Such ideas have been floated in the past but haven't taken hold.

However, tensions are increasing between Europe and the U.S. Allies are unsure about how involved the U.S. military will be in Europe going forward given the Pentagon's increased focus on countering China in the Pacific. And there is angst over Trump's recent phone call with Putin about the course of the war in Ukraine and how to bring it to an end.

European leaders and Zelenskyy have demanded a seat at the negotiating table, but it's not yet

clear how the structure of discussions would play out.

Retired Lt. Gen. Keith Kellogg, President Donald Trump's special envoy to Ukraine and Russia, said Saturday that Europe should put forward proposals for potential peace deals. But while European concerns would factor into talks, Kellogg said he did not anticipate Europeans having a literal seat at the table.

In a recent conversation with Trump, Zelenskyy said the American president briefed him on his call with Putin. Trump never once mentioned that he wanted Europe at the table, Zelenskyy said. Characterizing the U.S. as unreliable, Zelenskyy said Europeans should band together in a way that puts Europe first.

"Everything needed to protect lives in modern war should be produced in Europe. Fully," he said.

Fired nuclear safety experts may return to US agency

Bloomberg News

WASHINGTON—The Energy Department is seeking to bring back nuclear energy specialists after abruptly telling hundreds of workers that their jobs were eliminated, according to two people familiar with the matter.

The employees, responsible for designing and maintaining the nation's cache of nuclear weapons at the National Nuclear Security Administration, were part of a larger wave of workers dismissed from the Energy Department, drawing alarm from national security experts. Between 300 and 400 NNSA workers were terminated, according to a person familiar with the matter.

The agency's quick reversal was announced Friday in an all-staff meeting. The NNSA is seek-

ing to recall the workers because they deal with sensitive national security secrets, according to the people, who weren't authorized to talk about the matter which is not public.

Those cuts are especially concerning because the positions typically require high-level security clearances and training that can take 18 months or longer, said Jill Hruby, who served as the NNSA administrator during the Biden administration.

"These people are likely never going to come back and work for the government," Hruby said in a phone interview. "We've had a very active program requiring an increase to our staff so the indiscriminate layoffs of people will be really difficult for the coming years."

The firings — part of a wave of terminations across the federal government last week spurred by Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency — underscore the chaos as the world's richest man seeks to quickly overhaul the federal bureaucracy in President Donald Trump's image. At the Small Business Administration earlier in the week, some workers who were told they were being fired received a second message telling them that they weren't being terminated and that their jobs were safe — only to receive a third message telling them they were, in fact, out of a job.

The NNSA firings were part of a wider swath of dismissals across the Energy Department, which included employees at the

Loan Programs Office, a recently formed unit to fund clean energy projects, the group responsible for preventing cyberattacks against the power grid and the department's general counsel office.

The Energy Department and the NNSA did not respond to requests for comment.

The NNSA is a semi-autonomous arm of the Energy Department responsible for producing and dismantling nuclear weapons, providing the Navy with nuclear reactors for submarines and responding to radiological emergencies, among other duties.

The agency also plays a key role in counterterrorism, transporting nuclear weapons around the country and responding to nuclear incidents around the world.

USS Truman arrives in Greece for repairs

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

MUNICH, Germany — The aircraft carrier USS Harry S. Truman arrived Sunday at a U.S. naval base in Greece for repairs following last week's collision near the Suez Canal, the Navy said.

The Nimitz-class aircraft carrier sustained damage to its starboard quarter, including the exterior wall of two storage rooms, maintenance space and other areas, U.S. Naval Forces Europe and Africa said in a statement Sunday.

"While the ship is fully mis-

sion capable and the ship conducted flight operations following the collision, pulling into port for emergent repairs will enable the ship to continue deployment as scheduled," said Capt. Dave Snowden, the carrier's commander.

The damage was located just behind one of the carrier's aircraft elevators, which were reported to be undamaged.

There were no injuries caused by the collision, and the ship's propulsion plants also were unaffected, Navy officials have said.

The Truman is being worked on at the U.S. Navy's

Souda Bay base in Crete, where a team of engineers and naval architects will carry out a full survey of damaged areas and develop a repair plan, the Navy said.

The Truman collided with the Panama-flagged bulk cargo carrier Besiktas-M at 11:46 p.m. Wednesday as the carrier was transiting a congested area near the Suez Canal. The ship was presumably waiting to head south into the Red Sea.

The Truman has spent about two months on duty in the Red Sea supporting strikes against the Houthis in Yemen.

Truman's escort, the destroyer USS Jason Dunham, was nearby but not involved in the collision.

Other elements of the strike group remain operational "across geographic regions in support of their component commanders," said Truman strike group commander Rear Adm. Sean Bailey.

"Our mission has not changed and we remain committed to responding to any challenge in this dynamic and global security environment," Bailey said.

The Navy is investigating the accident.

Vance: US troops may join if Russia will not end war

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

U.S. troops on the ground in Ukraine are a consideration if Russia refuses to negotiate an end to the war, Vice President JD Vance said ahead of high-level security talks in Munich on Friday.

In an interview with The Wall Street Journal on Thursday, Vance said a deployment of American forces to Ukraine could be "on the table" along with more severe sanctions on Moscow in the event a peace deal doesn't ensure Ukraine's long-term security.

"There are economic tools of leverage; there are of course military tools of leverage," Vance told the Journal.

Vance's comments came before his anticipated meeting Friday with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in Munich, where global leaders gathered for a three-day security conference.

Early last week, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth said it's

unrealistic for Ukraine to return to its prewar borders as part of a peace deal.

He also dismissed the idea of NATO membership for Ukraine and ruled out U.S. troops on the ground in Ukraine as part of a potential international force responsible for keeping the peace.

Hegseth's comments rattled some allies and prompted criticism that the United States weakened its position by taking things off the negotiating table before the start of any formal talks.

Hegseth on Thursday, at the end of a two-day visit to NATO headquarters in Brussels, appeared to walk back some of his statements.

"These negotiations are led by President (Donald) Trump. Everything is on the table in his conversations with Vladimir Putin and Zelenskyy," Hegseth said. "What he decides to allow or not allow is at the purview of the leader of the free world of President Trump."

IG: SEALs sick off polluted waters around San Diego

The San Diego Union-Tribune

SAN DIEGO, Calif. — A government watchdog for the Department of Defense found that Navy SEAL candidates frequently train in sewage-tainted waters where pollution from Tijuana regularly fouls San Diego's South County shorelines, resulting in hundreds of cases of acute gastrointestinal illnesses.

The Feb. 7 report by the inspector general looked at how many times bacteria in the water exceeded state safety levels from February 2024 to September 2024 and whether the Naval Special Warfare Command, located on the Naval Amphibious Base in Coronado, relocated or rescheduled training to avoid exposure to the pollution.

Of 228 water quality tests conducted on samples taken from north and south beaches off the base, 76% of tests showed that bacteria surpassed safety levels, according to the DOD inspector general's findings.

During that same seven-month period, the command re-

located only 5% of 265 water training events, despite county beach postings directing the public to avoid contact with the polluted water. The command also disregarded those same beach closure advisories for three training events during a September 2023 Hell Week, the report added.

"As a result of Navy SEAL candidate exposure to contaminated water during training, candidates are presented with increased health risks and NAVSPECWARCOM's training mission could be impacted," Bryan Clark, assistant inspector general for Evaluations Programs, Combatant Commands, and Operations, said in the report.

Clark said the Naval Special Warfare Command reported 1,168 cases of acute gastrointestinal illnesses, such as nausea, diarrhea and vomiting, among Navy SEAL and Special Warfare Combat crewman candidates at the Coronado base from January 2019 to May 2023.

ICE struggles to boost arrest numbers

The Washington Post

Since taking office, President Donald Trump has launched an all-of-government immigration crackdown with the urgency of a wartime effort, a mobilization comparable in scope to the responses to the 9/11 attacks and the coronavirus pandemic.

But despite the rapid infusion of resources, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement is struggling to arrest higher numbers of immigrants and falling far short of the administration's goals.

The president wants federal agents from across the government — even the Internal Revenue Service — looking for potential deportees, and the FBI has said “thousands” of its employees are now supporting immigration operations. Trump

has sent hundreds of troops to the southern border and military transport planes loaded with immigrants to as far away as India. The Guantánamo Bay Naval Base, where U.S. forces once sent enemy combatants seized on the battlefield, is now a destination for immigrant detainees, many picked up at the Mexican border.

ICE officers stormed out of the gates during the first 10 days of the administration. The agency did highly publicized enforcement raids in “sanctuary” cities run by Democrats, bringing along television crews and celebrities like Dr. Phil. For several days, ICE published its daily arrest numbers on social media, which started in the several hundreds per day and reached 1,179 on Jan. 26.

ICE arrests have sagged so far this month, according to data provided by the Department of Homeland Security, declining from about 800 per day in late January after Trump took office to fewer than 600 during the first 13 days of February. The administration has stopped publishing daily numbers, and Trump officials said they will release the data on a monthly basis to conserve resources. It is a level well below the Trump administration's goal of 1,200 to 1,500 arrests per day.

“I’m not happy. We need more,” Tom Homan, Trump’s designated “border czar,” said Thursday on Newsmax. He did not respond to a request for comment.

The top two enforcement officials at ICE were removed from

their jobs last week and reassigned due to what Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem said was a lack of “results.”

But critics have seen something else.

“I see a lot of show,” said Jason Houser, who was chief of staff for ICE during the Biden administration. “This administration wants to continuously bring in every piece of the government away from their mission.” He added that federal law enforcement officials who usually focus on illicit firearms, drugs and sex traffickers are now “standing around in their jackets arresting noncriminals.”

A major hindrance to Trump’s mass deportation goals has been ICE’s limited resources and staffing.

IRS will lay off thousands of probationary workers

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The IRS will lay off thousands of probationary workers in the middle of tax season, according to two sources familiar with the agency’s plans, and cuts could happen as soon as this week.

This comes as the Trump administration intensified sweeping efforts to shrink the size of the federal workforce, by ordering agencies to lay off nearly all probationary employees who had not yet gained civil service protection.

It’s unclear how many IRS workers will be affected.

Previously, the administration announced a plan to offer buyouts to almost all federal employees through a “deferred resignation program” to quickly reduce the government workforce. The program deadline was Feb. 6, and administration officials said employees who accept will be able to stop working while still collecting a paycheck until Sept. 30.

IRS employees involved in the 2025 tax season, however, were told they will not be allowed to accept a buyout offer from the Trump administration until after the taxpayer filing deadline, according to a letter sent recently to IRS employees.

It is unclear how many workers will be impacted by the layoff announcement plan. Representatives from the U.S. Treasury and IRS did not respond to Associated Press requests for comment.

Jan. 27 was the official start date of the 2025 tax season, and the IRS expects more than 140 million tax returns to be filed by the April 15 deadline. The Biden administration invested heavily in the IRS through an \$80 billion infusion of funds in Democrats’ Inflation Reduction Act, which included plans to hire tens of thousands of new employees to help with customer service and enforcement as well as new technology to update the tax collection agency.

Reciprocal tariffs likely to upend global trade policy

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump is taking a blowtorch to the rules that have governed world trade for decades. The “reciprocal” tariffs that he announced Thursday are likely to create chaos for global businesses and conflict with America’s allies and adversaries alike.

Since the 1960s, tariffs — or import taxes — have emerged from negotiations between dozens of countries. Trump wants to seize the process.

“Obviously, it disrupts the way that things have been done for a very long time,” said Richard Mojica, a trade attorney at Miller & Chevalier. “Trump is throwing that out the window ... Clearly this is ripping up trade. There are going to have to be adjustments all over the place.”

Pointing to America’s massive and persistent trade deficits — not since 1975 has the United States sold the rest of the world more than it’s bought — Trump

has charged that the playing field is tilted against U.S. companies. A big reason for that, he and his advisers have said, is because other countries usually tax American exports at a higher rate than America taxes theirs.

Trump has a fix: He’s raising U.S. tariffs to match what other countries charge.

The president is an unabashed tariff supporter. He used them in his first term and three weeks into his second he has already slapped 10% tariffs on China, effectively raised U.S. taxes on foreign steel and aluminum, and threatened, then delayed for 30 days, 25% taxes on goods from Canada and Mexico.

Economists don’t share Trump’s enthusiasm for tariffs. They’re a tax on importers that usually get passed on to consumers. But it’s possible that Trump’s reciprocal tariff threat could bring other countries to the table and get them to lower their own import taxes.

Rubio says Hamas must be eradicated

Associated Press

JERUSALEM — U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio on Sunday fully endorsed Israel's war aims in the Gaza Strip, saying Hamas "must be eradicated" and throwing the future of the shaky ceasefire into further doubt.

Rubio met with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Jerusalem at the start of a regional tour, where he is likely to face pushback from Arab leaders over President Donald Trump's proposal to transfer the Palestinian population out of the Gaza Strip and redevelop it under U.S. ownership.

Netanyahu has welcomed the

plan, and said he and Trump have a "common strategy" for Gaza's future.

Echoing Trump, he said "the gates of hell would be open" if Hamas does not release dozens of remaining hostages abducted in its Oct. 7, 2023, attack that triggered the war.

Their remarks came just two weeks before the first phase of the ceasefire is set to end.

The second phase, in which Hamas is to release dozens of remaining hostages in exchange for the release of more Palestinian prisoners, a lasting truce and the withdrawal of Israeli forces, has yet to be negotiated.

Rubio said Hamas "cannot continue as a military or government force."

"As long as it stands as a force that can govern or as a force that can administer or as a force that can threaten by use of violence, peace becomes impossible," Rubio said. "It must be eradicated."

Such language could complicate efforts to continue talks with Hamas, which, despite suffering heavy losses in the war, remains intact and in control of Gaza.

The Israeli military meanwhile said it carried out an airstrike early Sunday on people who approached its forces in

southern Gaza.

The Hamas-run Interior Ministry said the strike killed three of its policemen while they were securing the entry of aid trucks near Rafah, on the Egyptian border.

Hamas said that attack was a "serious violation" of the ceasefire and accused Netanyahu of trying to sabotage the deal.

Resuming the war could be a death sentence for the remaining hostages and may not succeed in annihilating Hamas, which survived a 15-month Israeli onslaught and quickly reasserted control over Gaza when the ceasefire took hold last month.

Suspect in fatal stabbing had 'Islamic terror motive'

Associated Press

VIENNA — Austrian authorities said the stabbing of six passersby that left a 14-year-old boy dead was carried out by a man with possible connections to Islamic State who appeared to have acted alone.

The suspect, a 23-year-old Syrian, was arrested after the attack in the southern city of Vil-

lach on Saturday. Five others were wounded.

"This is an Islamist attack with an ISIS connection by an attacker who radicalized himself within a very short time via the internet online," said Interior Minister Gerhard Karner told reporters Sunday.

State Gov. Peter Kaiser thanked a 42-year-old man, also

a Syrian, working for a food delivery company who drove toward the suspect and helped prevent the situation from getting worse. "This shows how closely terrorist evil but also human good can be united in one and the same nationality."

According to state police director Michaela Kohlweiss, police searched the suspect's

apartment with sniffer dogs and found ISIS flags on the walls.

The attacker used a folding knife, Kohlweiss said. Those wounded include two 15-year-old boys, a 28-year-old man, a 32-year-old man, and a 36-year-old man. Four of them are receiving hospital treatment and one is being treated for minor injuries.

Zelenskyy rebuffs US draft for critical minerals, support

Associated Press

MUNICH, Germany — Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy says he directed his ministers not to sign off on a proposed agreement to give the United States access to Ukraine's rare earth minerals because the document was too focused on U.S. interests.

The proposal, which was a key part of Zelenskyy's talks with U.S. Vice President JD Vance on the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference on Friday, did not offer any specific security guarantees in return, according to one current and one former senior

Ukrainian official familiar with the talks.

Zelenskyy's decision not to sign a deal, at least for now, was described as "short-sighted" by a senior White House official.

"I didn't let the ministers sign a relevant agreement because in my view it is not ready to protect us, our interest," Zelenskyy told The Associated Press on Saturday in Munich.

The proposal focused on how the U.S. could use Kyiv's rare earth minerals "as compensation" for support already given to Ukraine by the Biden administration and as payment for future

aid, current and former senior Ukrainian officials said, speaking anonymously so they could speak freely.

Ukraine has vast reserves of critical minerals that are used in the aerospace, defense and nuclear industries. The Trump administration has indicated it is interested in accessing them to reduce dependence on China but Zelenskyy said any exploitation would need to be tied to security guarantees for Ukraine that would deter future Russian aggression.

"For me is very important the connection between some kind of security guarantees and some

kind of investment," the Ukrainian president said.

Zelenskyy did not go into details about why he instructed his officials not to sign the document, which was given to Ukrainian officials on Wednesday by U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent on a visit to Kyiv.

The Trump administration has grown weary of sending additional U.S. aid to Ukraine and White House National Security Council spokesman Brian Hughes said a minerals deal would allow American taxpayers to "recoup" money sent to Kyiv, while growing Ukraine's economy.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Derailment caused by beaver dam, officials say

ME SANDWICH ACADEMY

GRANT TOWNSHIP — A train derailment in rural Maine that spilled hundreds of gallons of fuel and hospitalized three workers was attributable to a beaver dam, state officials said.

The April 2023 freight train derailment took place in heavily forested Somerset County and also led to a forest fire. Railway owner Canadian Pacific Kansas City led cleanup and repair efforts after the derailment, in which three locomotive engines and six train cars carrying lumber and electrical wiring went off track.

A permitting and compliance manager for the Maine Land Use Planning Commission said excessive water flowed through a beaver dam and washed out part of the track, the Bangor Daily News reported. A flow that allows water to go through a beaver dam let go and a massive amount of water came down through culverts under the railroad tracks, Audie Arbo said.

\$400M plan to buy armored Teslas halted

FL FORT LAUDERDALE — The State Department had been in talks with Elon Musk's Tesla company to buy armored electric vehicles, but the plans have been put on hold by the Trump administration after reports emerged about a potential \$400 million purchase.

A State Department spokesperson said the electric car company owned by Musk, who has become President Donald Trump's billionaire adviser

aiming to dismantle agencies and downsize the federal workforce, was the only one that expressed interest back in May 2024, when Joe Biden was president.

While it was in its planning phases, the deal with Tesla was forecast to be the largest contract of the year.

It shows how some of his wealth has come and was still expected to come from taxpayers before the plans were put on hold. His companies obtain hundreds of millions of dollars each year in contracts. SpaceX has secured nearly \$20 billion in federal funds since 2008 to ferry astronauts and satellites into space. And Tesla had already received \$41.9 million from the U.S. government, including payment for vehicles provided to some U.S. embassies.

Igloo recalls coolers after fingertip amputations

NY NEW YORK — Igloo is recalling more than 1 million of its coolers sold across the U.S., Mexico and Canada due to a handle hazard that has resulted in a handful of fingertip injuries, including some amputations.

The now-recalled "Igloo 90 Qt. Flip & Tow Rolling Coolers" have a tow handle that can pinch users' fingertips against the product — posing potential amputation and other crushing risks, according to a Thursday recall notice from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.

Igloo has received 12 injury reports in the U.S., the CPSC notes, which include fingertip amputations, bone fractures and lacerations. There are no

known injuries in Canada or Mexico.

Consumers are urged to stop using the coolers immediately — and contact Igloo for a free replacement handle.

Nearly 300 had guns taken under red flag law

MI LANSING, Mich. — Nearly three in every four red flag law requests in Michigan over the last year resulted in the confiscation of guns from a person believed to be a threat to himself or others, new state data shows.

Judges across Michigan granted 287 of the 391 requests for a seizure of weapons during the first full year of implementation of the Extreme Risk Protection Order Act, a red flag law that was passed in the wake of the fatal Feb. 13, 2023, shooting at Michigan State University.

The law allows people — mostly family members or police — to petition a judge to order the removal of firearms from an individual deemed to be a risk to themselves or others, while also allowing for later appeals of the order.

Delegate delivered baby, allowed to vote remotely

VA RICHMOND — Del. Destiny LeVere Bolling became the first woman in Virginia allowed by political leaders to vote remotely after she delivered her child earlier this month, casting her votes miles from a statehouse historically governed by men.

About a third of state lawmakers are women, garnering 49 out of 140 seats. And of those female legislators, about two dozen have kids under 18, ranging from newborns to teens. But

while LeVere Bolling juggled committee meetings, the delegate went into labor. Clerk G. Paul Nardo confirmed she is the first lawmaker granted permission to vote remotely because of childbirth.

The Virginia House of Delegates first allowed remote voting due to the COVID-19 pandemic and hosted virtual sessions, whereas the Senate continued to meet in person but allowed members to participate online. This year's House rules allow Democratic House Speaker Don Scott to let a member participate electronically to ensure their safety.

LSU to reinstate prof removed over comments

LA BATON ROUGE — A judge has ordered Louisiana State University to fully reinstate a professor who was removed from his teaching duties last month after he used vulgar language to criticize Gov. Jeff Landry and President Donald Trump during a lecture.

The ruling, which allowed tenured law professor Ken Levy to return to his classroom last week, was issued following the conclusion of Tuesday's hearing over a lawsuit Levy filed against the university.

During two days of testimony, law students and another professor spoke about the "chilling effect" Levy's removal had on them and that it exacerbated fears over speaking freely in the classroom.

The legal battle stems from an anonymous student complaint pertaining to what the professor said on the first day of a criminal justice course in January.

— From wire reports

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US tops Canada, makes 4 Nations final

Associated Press

MONTREAL — Starting with three fights in the first nine seconds and ending with a celebration and a spot in the 4 Nations Face-Off final, the United States delivered exactly what Matthew Tkachuk hoped for by beating Canada on Saturday night.

“We needed to send a message,” Tkachuk said. “The message we wanted to send is ‘It’s our time.’”

Tkachuk fought Brandon Hagel off the opening faceoff, brother Brady tussled with Sam Bennett the next time the puck dropped, J.T. Miller dropped the gloves with Colton Parayko next and the Americans followed those fisticuffs with a 3-1 victory over their biggest rival.

“That was one of the best experiences of my life — just an unbelievable hockey game,” said Dylan Larkin, who scored the go-ahead goal in the second period. “The Tkachuk brothers and Millsy, what a start, and credit to those guys for answering the bell. And the crowd, just a great night for our sport and a great night for this rivalry.”

Played at a blistering pace with physicality throughout, the most anticipated game of 4 Nations round-robin play did not disappoint, from the fisticuffs off the opening faceoff to big hits from Charlie McAvoy on Canadian star Sidney Crosby and Connor McDavid and more than a few vital saves by Connor Hellebuyck among his 24. And the U.S. showed it could keep up with Canada’s speed, skill and talent in the first international tournament with the NHL’s best players in nearly a decade.

“What an incredible hockey game,” U.S. coach Mike Sullivan said.

It all unfolded against the backdrop of uneasy tensions between the North American neighbors and longtime allies, with many fans in the sellout crowd of 21,105 at Bell Centre loudly booing throughout the pregame rendition of the U.S. anthem. That spilled onto the ice as soon as the puck was dropped, with Matthew Tkachuk asking Brandon Hagel to drop the gloves and the fourth-line Canada winger engaging in the fight two seconds in.

Brother Brady Tkachuk did the same with Bennett the moment the puck was dropped on the ensuing faceoff three seconds in. Miller cross-checked Parayko, and the two went at it to make it a trio of bouts in the early going.

The idea came from a group chat involving the Tkachuk brothers and Miller. Canada coach Jon Cooper called the first minute purely “mayhem.”

“It was, I guess, 10 years of no international hockey exhaled in a minute and a half,” Cooper said.

The old-school pugilism did not go great early for the U.S., with the Tkachuks in the penalty box for the first five minutes. McDavid accelerated around the top defensive pair of McAvoy and Zach Werenski and roofed a backhander over Hellebuyck that few goaltenders around would be able to stop.

But Canada’s questions in net continued when Jake Guentzel beat Jordan Binnington five-hole midway through the first period to tie it. And the perpetually reliable captain Canada, Crosby, made a rare mistake

with a turnover that, combined with a bad line change, paved the way for Larkin to score on a 2-on-1 past the midway mark of regulation.

“He’s not afraid to shoot it,” Brady Tkachuk said. “He’s got a great shot, and it ended up being the game-winner.”

Binnington around that play made some timely stops, and Canada — without top defenseman Cale Makar because of illness — had plenty of chances to tie it but could not get the puck past Hellebuyck again. Guentzel scored into an empty net with 1:19 left to seal it, and the result puts an all-world roster led by McDavid, Crosby and Nathan MacKinnon in a must-win situation Monday against Finland.

“It’s kind of like a Game 7,” McDavid said. “A lot of guys in this room have been in that situation before. Got to get a win.”

Up next

The tournament shifts to TD Garden in Boston for games Monday, with Canada finishing round-robin play against Finland and the U.S. against Sweden.

Fans in Montreal loudly boo US anthem before game

Associated Press

Fans in Montreal loudly booed the U.S. national anthem prior to the 4 Nations Face-Off game between the Americans and Canada on Saturday night.

It’s the second time that “The Star-Spangled Banner” drew that reaction in two games the United States has played at the NHL-run international tournament.

And it came after public address announcer Michel Lacroix asked the crowd, in French and English, “In the spirit of this great game that unites everyone that you kindly respect the anthems and the players that represent each

country.”

This time, far more of the fans at Bell Centre booed than Thursday night before the U.S. beat Finland. The booing began when warrant officer David Grenon of the Royal Canadian Air Force Band started singing and lasted the entire length of the song.

“We knew it was going to happen,” U.S. defenseman Zach Werenski said after beating Canada 3-1 and quieting the crowd of more than 21,000.

“It happened the last game, it’s been happening in the NHL before this and we knew tonight was going to be the same way. We obviously don’t like

it.”

U.S. players have been trying to tune it out. After beating Finland 6-1 on Thursday, goaltender Connor Hellebuyck said he “paid no attention to” the booing.

“You have free speech,” Hellebuyck said. “You can do whatever you want. If you’re going to boo the anthem, we sing it for the troops that protected our freedom. That doesn’t really mean anything to me. You can do whatever you want. But I don’t use it at all (as motivation).”

Werenski said it provided some fuel with the United States serving in the villain

role in Canada.

“It is what it is,” Werenski said. “We kind of had an idea. We used it as motivation the best we could and found a way to get a win. But we had an idea going into it, so it wasn’t a surprise. Definitely don’t like it, though.”

Fans across Canada have booed the U.S. anthem at NHL and NBA games since President Donald Trump began making repeated references to the country becoming “the 51st state.” Trump also threatened tariffs against the country, prompting backlash from the close neighbor and longtime ally.

Auburn edges Alabama in historic showdown

Associated Press

TUSCALOOSA, Ala. — Auburn and Alabama had never played as top-10 teams. On Saturday, the Tigers and Crimson Tide squared off as the top teams in the country — and didn't disappoint.

No. 1 Auburn went on the road and beat No. 2 Alabama 94-85 in the historic matchup of in-state rivals. And a rematch of the top-rated teams might be coming shortly, because they meet again at Auburn on March 8. And they might not be done then — they could face off in the Southeastern Conference and NCAA tournaments.

"All eyes in college basketball were on the state of Alabama and the SEC," Tigers coach Bruce Pearl said after his team improved to 23-2 overall and 11-1 in the conference. "What this conference has done in men's basketball is historic."

Pearl pointed to Auburn's hot start in the game, scoring the first nine points, as key to winning on the road in big games.

Crimson Tide coach Nate Oats noted that run, too, as well as the Tigers scoring the final seven points of the first half and six of the first eight points of the second half as pivotal moments.

"I thought we played pretty hard and didn't turn the ball over a whole lot," Oats said, noting seven turnovers. "Too many guys were getting 3's off that weren't supposed to be getting 3's and they go 12-for-30 from 3."

Auburn forward Johni Broome used the stage to restate his case in the player-of-the-year race — one that took a hit after he missed two games due to injuries and played just two minutes in a third. Broome controlled the game Saturday, finishing with 19 points, 14

rebounds, six assists, two blocks and a steal.

"I came in trying to be aggressive and I was kind of feeling it a little bit, so went and made some plays," Broome said.

Broome briefly left the game late in the second half with a lower-body injury after an awkward spin move. He returned and made the Tigers' final two field goals.

Broome was a dominating force from the beginning — he grabbed his 10th rebound early in the second half, securing the double-double with just under 17 minutes left in the game.

Six Auburn players finished in double figures, led by Broome. Denver Jones scored 16 points, Chad Baker-Mazara and Miles Kelly added 15 points apiece, Chaney Johnson had 14 and Tahaad Pettiford 13.

Tigers starter Dylan Cardwell

fouled out after playing just 12 minutes, Baker-Mazara, who came off the bench, fouled out with just over two minutes remaining. Johnson, who averages 23 minutes, picked up much of the slack, playing 33 minutes as Auburn shot 46% from the field.

Mark Sears scored 18 points and Grant Nelson added 12 points and 12 rebounds for Alabama, which rallied from a double-digit deficit in the game but failed to complete the comeback.

Oats used the loss as a refocusing opportunity with his team for the three weeks until their next game against the Tigers.

"We're not in full control of our destiny to win the league outright, but we are in control of our destiny to at least get a tie going forward," Oats said. "We'll see the maturity and leadership we have coming in on Monday."

Michigan St.'s Izzo passes Knight for most Big Ten wins

Associated Press

CHAMPAIGN, Ill. — Michigan State's Tom Izzo followed one of the most disappointing losses of his coaching career with a record-setting victory.

The No. 11 Spartans came from behind to beat Illinois 79-65 on Saturday night for Izzo's 354th career Big Ten victory, breaking former Indiana coach Bob Knight's record of 353 conference wins.

"What a win," Izzo said. "You talk about the highest of highs and the lowest of lows."

"We disappointed so many people (Tuesday) when we lost to Indiana at home. It was one of the worst defeats of my career because of the way we played. To pick ourselves off the ground after that loss and win in this environment after falling behind by 16 points (in the first half) was incredible."

Jaxson Kohler had 23 points and 10 rebounds for the Spartans, while Tre Holloman added 14.

Izzo, who celebrated his 70th birthday on Jan. 30, is 354-173 in Big Ten play in 30 seasons. He's 727-300 overall since replacing Jud Heathcote in 1995 after serving as an assistant to Heathcote from 1983-95.

No. 3 Duke 106, Stanford 70: Tyrese Proctor scored 23 points, Cooper Flagg contributed 19 points, six assists and five rebounds, and the host Blue Devils beat the Cardinal.

Khaman Maluach had 17 points, Sion James finished with 14 and Caleb Foster scored 10 for Duke (22-3, 14-1 Atlantic Coast Conference).

No. 3 Florida 88, South Carolina 67: Denzel Aberdeen scored 22 points, Thomas Haugh added 20 and the host Gators beat the Gamecocks.

Florida (22-3, 9-3 Southeastern Conference) led by four at halftime and started the second half with a 12-1 run to open up a comfortable lead. South Carolina (10-15, 0-12) never recovered.

No. 5 Tennessee 81, Vanderbilt 76: Zakai Zeigler scored 22 points, all in the second half, as the host Volunteers rallied from a 16-point first-half deficit to beat the Commodores.

No. 6 Houston 62, No. 13 Arizona 58: Milos Uzan scored 19 points, L.J. Cryer added 15 and the visiting Cougars took firm control of the Big 12 Conference race with a win over the Wildcats.

No. 16 Wisconsin 94, No. 7 Purdue 84: John Tonje scored 22 of his 32 points in the second half and Max Klesmit added 17 points and six assists to help the visiting Badgers beat the Boilermakers.

No. 8 Texas A&M 69, Arkansas 61: Wade Taylor IV scored 18 points as the host Aggies extended their winning streak to five games with a win over the Razorbacks.

No. 10 Iowa State 81, Cincinnati 70: Backup guard Curtis Jones made all 12 of his free throws and scored 22 points to help the host Cyclones beat the Bearcats for their 20th victory of the season.

No. 12 Texas Tech 93, Oklahoma State 55: JT Toppin had 32 points and 12 rebounds as the visiting Red Raiders routed the Cowboys.

Texas 82, No. 15 Kentucky 78: Freshman Tre Johnson scored 32 points and senior Trammon Mark had 26 as the host Longhorns defeated the Wildcats, snapping a three-game losing streak.

Utah 74, No. 17 Kansas 67: Gabe Madsen scored 24 points and became the host Utes' career leader in made 3-pointers in a victory over the Jayhawks.

No. 22 Mississippi State 81, No. 19 Mississippi 71: R.J. Melendez had 17 points to lead the visiting Bulldogs' balanced offense for a win over the Rebels and a season sweep of their in-state rival.

No. 21 Missouri 87, Georgia 74: Anthony Robinson II scored 15 points, including seven in a 15-0 run in the second half, leading the visiting Tigers past the Bulldogs.

No. 23 Clemson 72, Florida St. 46: Dillon Hunter scored a career-best 17 points as the visiting Tigers jumped out to a big lead and put away the Seminoles.

McClung gets dunk contest three-peat

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Mac McClung will leave it up to others to decide where he ranks among the best dunkers ever. When it comes to the dunk contest, however, there is no doubt.

The G League star and dunk maven put on a remarkable show at NBA All-Star Saturday night by recording perfect scores of 50 on all four of his jaw-dropping, creative dunks to become the first player to win three straight dunk contests.

"It kind of feels like a blur," he said. "It's something I love doing. That's where my creativity comes in. I genuinely love this contest and I love to dunk."

Nate Robinson is the only other player to win the dunk contest three times, taking it in 2006 and then repeating in 2009-10.

McClung needed to be nearly perfect to top San Antonio's Stephon Castle in the final round after Castle followed up a 49.6 with his first dunk with a 50 on his second when he went behind his back to switch from his right

hand to left before the slam.

But McClung was up to the task and now has as many dunk contest wins in his career as he does dunks in NBA games, according to Sportradar, as he has only played five games in the NBA.

For his final dunk, McClung stationed 6-foot-11 Evan Mobley on a platform in front of the basket. With Mobley holding the ball behind his head, the 6-2 McClung jumped over him, then tapped the rim with the ball before slamming it home to the delight of the crowd and judges.

McClung's first dunk in the final round featured him taking one ball in midair for a windmill dunk with his right hand while slamming home another stationed near the rim with his left.

McClung also received two perfect scores in the opening round. On the first, a car was parked in the lane with a person standing through the sun roof with a ball. McClung jumped over the car, took the ball and

did a reverse, behind-the-head dunk drawing gasps from the crowd and a 50.

McClung didn't disappoint on his next try despite having already clinched a spot in the final. He jumped over a person holding the ball and did a twisting, no-look dunk for another 50.

Castle advanced with more traditional dunks that earned him a total score of 95.

3-point contest

Miami's Tyler Herro edged out Golden State's Buddy Hield to win the 3-point contest at the NBA's All-Star Saturday night.

Damian Lillard missed a chance to join Larry Bird and Craig Hodges as the only players to three-peat as 3-point champions with his score of 18 falling one point short of Herro for the final spot in the three-person final.

Herro followed up his third-place performance in the opening round to set the pace in the final with 24 points. He made both special shots worth 3 points

and then three of five from the money ball rack worth two points each to end it.

Hield followed up a scintillating opening round with 31 points, but missed his first six shots in the final. But he got going after that to the delight of his home crowd and had a chance to pull out the win by making six straight money balls to end it.

He made four in a row before one shot rimmed out. He made the final shot to end with 23 points.

Skills Challenge

Cleveland duo Evan Mobley and Donovan Mitchell teamed up to knock off hometown heroes Moses Moody and Draymond Green to win the NBA's Skills Challenge crown.

The final game after San Antonio's Victor Wembanyama and Chris Paul were disqualified for trying to cheat the rules in the obstacle course that features players speeding through stations with passing and shooting drills.

SEC dominates selection committee's initial top seeds

Associated Press

Auburn has spent the past month ranked as the nation's best team in The Associated Press men's college basketball poll. The committee that will choose the 68-team field for the NCAA Tournament is just as high on the Tigers.

And the Southeastern Conference, for that matter.

Auburn was the top overall seed in the committee's preliminary rankings unveiled Saturday, while Alabama and Florida joined as No. 1 regional seeds. They were the headliners for a league that had five of the top six seeds and six spots in the 16-seed unveiling with a month left until Selection Sunday.

Duke was the only interruption to the SEC's running name

call at the top, claiming the No. 3 overall seed.

The Tigers have held the top spot in the AP Top 25 for five straight weeks, and in advanced metrics they rank No. 1 in KenPom; No. 2 for Bart Torvik; and No. 3 for Evan Miyakawa. They entered the weekend with a 13-2 record in Quadrant 1 games that headline a postseason resume; no other team had more than eight of those wins.

"Of all the voters in our group that were available to vote, they were the unanimous choice," committee chairman Bubba Cunningham said on the CBS unveiling broadcast. "So they are clearly our No. 1."

That impact trickled further down the bracket, too. Cunningham said five teams were seri-

ously considered for top seeds. Ultimately Tennessee lost out, with Cunningham pointing to the Gators' win over Auburn as the edge for Florida.

The seeds

SEC member Texas A&M followed the Volunteers as the No. 6 overall seed, followed by Purdue and Houston as regional 2-seeds. Iowa State was next at No. 9 overall, followed by Kentucky, Wisconsin and Arizona as regional 3-seeds.

Texas Tech, Michigan, preseason AP No. 1 Kansas and St. John's were 4-seeds to round out the top 16.

The regional paths

The Tigers are positioned to claim a close-to-home regional route by topping the South

bracket in Atlanta, grouped with the Aggies, Badgers and Red Raiders.

Alabama would head to the Midwest running through Indianapolis, followed by the Boiler-makers — which would have a home-state advantage in that scenario — Cyclones and Jayhawks.

The Blue Devils led the East, followed by Tennessee, Arizona and the Red Storm — which would put Rick Pitino's surging St. John's practically in its backyard in Newark, N.J.

Meanwhile, with Arizona as the only top-16 seed west of Texas, the Gators headlined the West bracket running through San Francisco. Florida was joined by the Cougars, Kentucky and the Wolverines.