

# STARS AND STRIPES®

Tuesday, January 12, 2016

A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

## Putin closely watching US missile moves

By JOHN VANDIVER

*Stars and Stripes*

President Vladimir Putin demonstrated a detailed understanding of U.S. missile defense plans during a recent interview, avoiding generalities for specifics when discussing a deployment Moscow sees as a direct strategic threat.

“Naval forces that should operate as part of missile defense are deployed in Spain,” Putin said in an interview with Bild, Germany’s top-selling newspaper. “A positioning area has already been created in Romania, another one will be created in Poland by 2018; a radar is being installed in Turkey.”

Over the years, U.S. missile defense plans in Europe have been subject to extensive change and modifications, with complicated timelines for build-

ing a network of land- and sea-based radars and interceptors.

And Putin is up to speed on all of it — a sign of how seriously the Russian leader takes U.S. missile defense efforts.

The U.S. and NATO have been developing ballistic missile defense capabilities in Europe for more than a decade, citing the threat of Iranian short- and medium-range ballistic missiles.

The Navy recently stationed its fourth and final Aegis-equipped ship in Rota, Spain, part of the U.S.-developed missile shield known as the European Phased Adaptive Approach. It continues to develop ground-based interceptor sites in Romania and Poland.

Russia regards those interceptor sites as a threat to its own missiles, a claim the U.S. disputes.

During the Bild interview, Putin lashed out at the plan, which he said should be curtailed in light of the recent nuclear deal struck with Iran.

“In 2009, current President of the United States Barack Obama said that if Iran’s nuclear threat no longer existed there would be no incentive for establishing the ABM system; this incentive would disappear,” Putin said in a transcript of the Bild interview, which was released on Monday.

“Apart from NATO’s expansion eastwards, the anti-ballistic missile system has become an issue in terms of security. All this is being developed in Europe under the pretext of addressing the Iranian nuclear threat,” Putin added.

Shortly after a nuclear deal between the West and Iran was reached in July, U.S. officials

rejected Moscow’s position that the agreement eliminated the need for missile defense. They cited Iran’s own ballistic missile program.

During the interview, Putin also lashed out at NATO for expanding eastward in the years since the end of the Cold War. The Russian leader said this violated an understanding between Moscow and the West that there would be no such expansion into Russia’s periphery.

NATO has repeatedly asserted no such agreement was ever made and that all nations have the right to seek their own alliances. But Putin noted that NATO members also have the right to turn down aspirant nations.

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## Bergdahl lawyer says client is entitled to medals

By COREY DICKSTEIN

*Stars and Stripes*

FORT BRAGG, N.C.— Accused Army deserter Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl should be awarded several medals, including the Purple Heart and Prisoner of War Medal, his military lawyer asserted Tuesday during a pre-trial hearing.

Army Lt. Col. Franklin Rosenblatt said Bergdahl, accused of abandoning his eastern Afghanistan post in 2009 before he was captured by the Taliban, was entitled to the awards and the Army’s failure to grant them could bias potential jurors in the trial.

Bergdahl faces a general court-martial on charges of “misbehavior before the enemy by endangering the safety of a command, unit or place” and

“desertion with intent to shirk important or hazardous duty.” He has not entered a plea.

“We believe this is a prejudice and casts a semblance of guilt,” Rosenblatt told Army Judge Col. Jeffrey R. Nance during the hearing, which largely focused on the defense’s ability to access classified material related to Bergdahl’s case. “We encourage the government to correct that.”

Bergdahl, who appeared for the first time in front of Nance on Tuesday, wore a pressed dress blue uniform with sergeant’s stripes, a Combat Infantryman Badge and 10 overseas service bars, representing his five years in captivity. Rosenblatt said Bergdahl should be authorized to wear the Purple Heart, the POW Medal, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal and

the NATO medal.

Nance, who will oversee Bergdahl’s court-martial scheduled for Aug. 8-19 at Fort Bragg, N.C., said there was time to resolve the issue before the trial, adding that any prejudice that could be caused by the lack of medals on future pretrial proceedings is “minimal.”

Bergdahl, 29, remains on active duty at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston, assigned to U.S. Army North. He spent five years imprisoned by the Taliban-linked Haqqani network before he was released in May 2014 in a controversial prisoner swap for five Taliban commanders who had been held in the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

The soldier faces up to life in prison if convicted of the more

serious misbehavior charge. The desertion charge carries a maximum penalty of five years in prison, a dishonorable discharge, reduction to the rank of E-1 and forfeiture of all pay and allowances.

Throughout the hearing, Bergdahl remained mostly silent, answering three questions from Nance, “Yes, sir.” The captive sat straight up in his chair throughout the nearly two-hour hearing, maintaining his focus on the judge.

Meanwhile, the prosecution and defense wrangled over wording in a protective order governing how classified information, including some 300,000 pages related to the case, is handled.

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## Court: Free speech protects wearing unearned medals

*San Francisco Chronicle*

SAN FRANCISCO — A federal law that prohibited people from wearing military medals they didn't earn is unconstitutional for the same reason as a law that made it a crime to lie about earning a medal, a federal appeals court ruled Monday: It's a falsehood protected by freedom of speech.

In an 8-3 ruling, the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco said the now-repealed law against wearing unearned military decorations was a ban on a type of "symbolic speech." Although the government can forbid falsehoods that cause tangible harm, like fraud or perjury, the Constitution restricts government regulation of expression based solely on its content, the court said.

In the majority opinion, Judge Sandra Ikuta cited the U.S. Supreme Court's 5-4 decision in 2012 striking down a related law that prohibited lying about earning a military honor. That decision said the law punished speech without requiring proof of intent to defraud, and that the government had other ways of protecting the public from deception — for example, an

easily accessible database of medal recipients. A year after that ruling, Congress enacted a revised law that makes it a crime to lie about military honors, but only if the liar intended to profit or defraud someone. The new law does not punish someone solely for wearing an unearned medal.

Dissenters from Monday's ruling said falsely wearing medals is conduct, not speech, and is potentially more harmful than lying about them.

"The wearing of an unearned medal dilutes the message conveyed by the medal itself," making the public less likely to accept the legitimacy of any medal, said Judge Jay Bybee.

The ruling came in the case of Elven Swisher, an Idaho man who served in the Marines from 1954 to 1957. In 2001, he filed a claim for post-traumatic stress disorder benefits, saying he had been wounded and traumatized in a secret combat mission in North Korea in 1955, two years after the Korean War ended. He said an unnamed captain had awarded him a Purple Heart. Swisher was convicted of the false-medal charge and has served his sentence.

## Syrian bomber hits Istanbul tourist site

*Associated Press*

ISTANBUL — A Syrian suicide bomber detonated a bomb in a historic district of Istanbul popular with tourists Tuesday morning, killing at least 10 people and wounding 15 others, Turkish officials said.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said in televised remarks that both Turks and foreigners were among the dead in the explosion in the Sultanahmet district.

"I strongly condemn the terror incident that occurred in Istanbul, at the Sultanahmet Square, and which has been assessed as being an attack by a Syria-rooted suicide bomber," Erdogan said.

Deputy Prime Minister Numan Kurtulmus said the bomber was a 28-year-old Syrian national whose "connections" were being investigated.

He said most of the people who died were foreigners. It was unclear whether the death toll of 10 included the alleged bomber.

At least nine of the wounded

were German nationals. German Chancellor Angela Merkel, speaking at a news conference in Berlin, said Germans from a group traveling together could also be among the dead.

"Today Istanbul was hit; Paris has been hit, Tunisia has been hit, Ankara has been hit before," Merkel said. "International terrorism is once again showing its cruel and inhuman face today."

The explosion, which could be heard from several neighborhoods, was at a park that is home to a landmark obelisk, some 25 yards from the historic Blue Mosque.

Turkey's Dogan news agency reported that one Norwegian and one Peruvian were also among the wounded, and Seoul's Foreign Ministry told reporters via text message a South Korean had a finger injury.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack, although the Islamic State group was suspected.

Kurdish militants and left-wing groups are active in Turkey.

### Source: Porn images got admiral canned

The Navy has removed a Coronado, Calif.-based admiral from his job on allegations he used his government computer to look at pornography.

Rear Adm. Richard L. Williams was relieved of command of Carrier Strike Group 15 on Friday due to alleged misuse of government computer equipment, the Navy said in a statement. A source familiar with the issue said the ongoing investigation uncovered evidence of intentional pornography use.

"It wasn't just an 'Oops' and hit a wrong URL," the source said.

No classified material was involved.

From The San Diego Union-Tribune

## Philippine court OKs defense pact with US

*Associated Press*

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine Supreme Court on Tuesday declared as constitutional a defense pact that allows American forces, warships and planes to temporarily base in local military camps, a boost to U.S. efforts to reassert its presence in Asia as China rises to regional dominance.

Ten of the 15 members of the high court also ruled that the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement, which was signed by U.S. and Philippine officials in 2014 and has a 10-year lifespan, is an executive agreement that does not need Senate approval, court spokesman Theodore Te said.

"EDCA is not constitutionally infirm as an executive agreement," Te said at a news conference after the justices' long-awaited vote.

The ruling will bolster U.S. efforts to reassert its presence in Asia and dovetails with Philippine efforts to harness America's help in addressing China's aggressive acts in the disputed South China Sea.

Washington immediately welcomed the court's decision, saying the defense pact is a mutually beneficial accord that will bolster both countries' ability to respond to disasters and strengthen the Philippines' military.

Left-wing activists said they would consider filing an appeal,

adding that U.S. military presence won't solve the country's worries over China in the disputed waters.

"This is another sad day for Philippine sovereignty," said left-wing activist Renato Reyes, who was one of those who challenged the legality of the defense accord before the high court. "We maintain that the EDCA is not the solution to the problems of China's incursions."

The Department of Foreign Affairs said that with the court's decision, the Philippines and the U.S. can finalize the full implementation of an agreement that is a critical component of efforts to strengthen national security and disaster-relief capabilities.

# Onside kick helps Tide win 4th title

Associated Press

GLENDALE, Ariz. — The last step toward making Alabama's run of championships under Nick Saban the greatest in college football history was the toughest.

The Crimson Tide needed all their power and speed. They needed all their talent and steely resolve. When that alone couldn't do it, they were up to one gutsy trick to help win the fourth national title of the Saban dynasty.

Derrick Henry, O.J. Howard and Kenyan Drake hit No. 1 Clemson with long touchdowns, and No. 2 Alabama outlasted the dynamic play of Deshaun Watson to win the College Football Playoff championship 45-40 on Monday night.

The Crimson Tide (14-1) won their three previous championship game appearances in runaway fashion. This game was an instant classic — a relief for fans who sat through the blowouts that turned the New Year's Six lineup into a dud.

It finally broke open on perhaps the boldest call of Saban's career.

With 10:34 left in the fourth quarter and Alabama having just tied the game at 24-24, Saban took a gamble to try to keep the ball away from Watson. He called for an onside kick called Pop Kick from Adam Griffith and Alabama defensive back Marlon Humphrey caught it over the shoulder at midfield.

Tide turned.

"It was tough. It really was," said Saban, who now has more national titles than every other coach but Bear Bryant, the man who first made Alabama synonymous with college football greatness.

"I made the decision to do it because

the score was [tied] and we were tired on defense and weren't doing a great job of getting them stopped and felt like if we didn't do something or take a chance to change the momentum of the game that we wouldn't have a chance to win," Saban said.

Moments later, Alabama took back the lead for good. For the second time, Clemson (14-1) lost track of tight end Howard in coverage and Jake Coker hit him in stride deep for a 51-yard touchdown to make it 31-24 with 9:45 left.

Clemson and Watson proved to be every bit Alabama's equal. The Tigers just kept coming.

Watson led Clemson to a field goal to make it 31-27, and boom! Another Alabama big play. Drake broke free and streaked down the sideline for a 95-yard kickoff return touchdown, diving the last 5 yards to the pylon.

Watson threw his third touchdown pass to make it 38-33 with 4:40 left, and then Alabama went back to its workhorse Heisman Trophy winner. Henry plunged into the end zone for his third touchdown of the game to make it 45-33 with 1:07 left.

"We stand toe-to-toe with everybody in the country," Clemson coach Dabo Swinney said. "This program doesn't take a backseat to anybody."

Watson threw another touchdown pass to cap a wild 40-point fourth quarter, but would not get another chance. Clemson's onside kick went out of bounds. Coker took a knee and after a two-year drought that felt like eternity in Tuscaloosa, Alabama was back on top.

After a loss to Ole Miss in mid-

September, there were doubters. Saban used them to fuel his team.

"There weren't many people earlier in the year who thought they could do it," he said.

Alabama became the second team in college football's poll era, dating back to 1936, to win four titles in seven seasons.

Alabama joins Notre Dame, which won four titles from 1943-49, but those Fighting Irish never even played in bowl games, nevertheless two playoff games. For Saban, it is his fifth national championship — four in his nine seasons at Alabama — leaving him only one short of Bryant.

Watson gave the Tide all they could handle, throwing for 405 yards and four touchdowns, and conjured up memories of Vince Young's miraculous performance for Texas in the 2006 Rose Bowl that derailed Southern California's dynasty.

The sophomore, who finished third in the Heisman Trophy voting, had 478 total yards against a loaded Tide defense and bested Young's 467 yards against the Trojans. But Watson couldn't finish the job the way Young did in Pasadena, Calif., and win the national title.

"All the stats don't really matter to me," Watson said. "I just wanted to get the win and do something that we haven't done in 34 years."

Instead, Saban and the Tide raised another trophy, their first in this new playoff system, and got another confetti shower. It is the Tide's 11th national title in the poll era — 10 AP and one coaches' poll — and more than any other school.

Alabama was a unanimous No. 1 in the final AP poll and Clemson finished No. 2.

The Tide hit Clemson early with Henry, who scored the game's first touchdown on a 50-yard burst through the middle. He finished with 158 yards on 36 carries. Howard was the offensive player of the game with five catches for 208 yards, including a 63-yarder that set up Alabama's final score.

After Watson and walk-on Hunter Renfrow hooked up for two touchdowns to give Clemson a 14-7 lead at the end of the first quarter, Henry tied it up with a 1-yard plunge.

Back and forth it went.

Alabama had never been challenged like this in a championship game under Saban. Alabama pulled away from Texas for Saban's first Tide title to end the 2009 season. Alabama blanked LSU for the next in 2011 and crushed Notre Dame to repeat in 2012.

Trying to become the first FBS team to go 15-0, Clemson did not crumble under the force of Alabama's might.

But all those five-star recruits and future NFL players that dot the Alabama roster showed they also have plenty of resiliency and toughness. And Saban, the quintessential CEO coach, showed he had a little riverboat gambler in him.

That onside kicked stunned the stadium and Clemson, and brought a big grin to the face of the country's most serious coach.

The Tide will send another batch of players to the NFL this year, as Saban always does. There is another wave ready to roll.

"I think as long as he's in Alabama," Coker said, "Alabama is going to be up at the top."

## Watson's big night not enough to lift Clemson

Associated Press

GLENDALE, Ariz. — Get ready, Heisman. Deshaun Watson's coming for you.

Clemson's sublime sophomore marked himself a clear front runner for college football's top individual prize with a stellar performance on the biggest stage of his career. The only drawback? Watson and the Tigers couldn't pull out a victory, falling to Alabama 45-40 in the national championship game Monday night.

If anyone thought Watson would be rattled by Alabama's huge, fast defensive line, they were quickly proven wrong. Watson threw for four touchdowns and accounted for 478 yards of offense, the Tigers topping the Crimson Tide almost everywhere but on the scoreboard.

Watson was about the only one not impressed by his showing.

"At the end of the day I wanted the W," he said. "All the stats don't really matter to me. I just wanted to get the win and do something we hadn't done in 34 years."

It might not be that long before Clemson contends again, especially with Watson back next season.

Watson, who finished third behind Alabama's Derrick Henry and Stanford's Christian McCaffrey in the Heisman Trophy voting, had carried the Tigers (14-1) all season. He broke the Atlantic Coast Conference mark for total yardage held for 13 years by NC State quarterback Philip Rivers.

Even in defeat, Watson passed his toughest test.

"No question, no doubt about it," Clemson coach Dabo Swinney said when asked if Watson was the country's best player. "He's special, he really is."

Alabama coach Nick Saban was impressed, too.

"We thought, to be honest with you, we could do a better job against their quarterback," Saban said. "He did a fantastic job in the game."

Watson had two scoring passes to Hunter Renfrow in the opening half, the first coming as he sweetly dropped the ball into his receiver's arms between two Alabama defenders.

Alabama had allowed only 19 points in the opening quarter of its first 14 games before giving up two touchdowns to

Watson's Tigers.

Watson finished with 405 yards passing, the most any quarterback has hung on the Crimson Tide this year. He also ran for 73 yards.

Watson's had bigger stat showings, his career best coming with 435 yards passing in his first game as a starter last season against North Carolina.

His performance was reminiscent of Vince Young's dramatic effort in leading Texas past USC in the 2006 Rose Bowl for a national title. Young's 467 total yards — 200 rushing, 267 passing — represented a seminal effort for dual-threat QBs and Watson was better. He just didn't bring home the title.

Watson said the trek to next season starts when he returns to campus this week. Asked where he can improve next season, offensive lineman Eric Mac Clain quickly interrupted, "Nowhere."

Watson disagrees. He said he's got to work on his accuracy and get stronger. He understood his mistake in a first-half interception that gave Alabama the chance to tie the game and blunt Clemson's momentum.

Alabama seized control on special teams, first with an onside kick that two plays later, led to a 51-yard TD pass from Jake Coker to O.J. Howard. Then came Kenyan Drake's dramatic 95-yard kickoff return score after Clemson had closed within 31-27.

It was just the second time Watson lost as a Clemson starter. He came into the season a question mark, a superbly talented dual-threat with a history of injuries.

Watson had surgery last December to repair the ACL in his left knee. He said from the outset that he wouldn't let that change his style — and Watson did not.

He led Clemson to its 15th ACC title in December and a second straight blowout bowl victory over Oklahoma, this one in the national semifinals.

Watson's play, though, could not make up for Clemson's mistakes on defense and special teams. Those are correctable, Watson said, and will be fixed before next season — and another run at a national title.

"You'll see us in Tampa next year," he said.



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# Spurs extend streak to eight

Associated Press

NEW YORK — The Spurs are the NBA's pillar of consistency and stability, an organization these Nets could only hope to resemble — on the court and in the front office.

"San Antonio is the gold standard for the NBA," Nets interim coach Tony Brown said.

LaMarcus Aldridge had 25 points and 11 rebounds as the Spurs extended their winning streak to eight with a 106-79 victory Monday night over Brooklyn in the Nets' first game since an organizational shake-up.

A day after coach Lionel Hollins was fired and general manager Billy King reassigned, the Nets dropped their 10th straight at home and fifth in a row overall.

"We ran into a sledgehammer of a team," Brown said. "They definitely know how to play together and that's something we're going to strive and try to do here."

Kawhi Leonard added 17 points for the Spurs, who were to go to Detroit on Tuesday before putting their 31-game home winning streak on the line Thursday in a showdown with Cleveland.

The Spurs (33-6) were up seven at halftime before dominating the second half, just as they did in their 102-75 victory over the Nets on Oct. 30. Those are two of their 14 wins by 20 or more points this season, and their leadership under Gregg Popovich and general manager R.C. Buford matters just as much as the contributions of the players.

"It's consistency," Aldridge said. "There's no surprises. You know what you're going to get day in and day out, game in game out, so it just makes it easier to do your job for sure."

Brook Lopez scored 18 points and Joe Johnson had 16 for the Nets, who haven't won at home in more than a month. Brown moved guards Wayne Ellington and Donald Sloan into the starting lineup, but they combined for just 10 points on 4-for-12 shooting.

The Nets fell to 10-28, hours after owner Mikhail Prokhorov said the team needed a "reset" and that choosing to start it in the middle of the season was an easy decision. But no change could change things against the Spurs, the latest visiting team to win the crowd and the game in Brooklyn.

"You've got to give them a lot of credit first. They're a great, arguably the best team in this league, but you have to stay poised, you have to stick to your game plan," Johnson said.

"We had to do a great job for 48 minutes and obviously in the third quarter they opened it up."

Fans cheered loudest for 7-foot-3 Serbian Boban Marjanovic, who finished with 13 points and was on the floor in the final seconds when a "Go Spurs Go!" chant broke out. "This is good because if people love you, you are good," Marjanovic said of the cheers, "and I feel great."

**Warriors 111, Heat 103:** Stephen Curry scored 31 points and Draymond Green added 22 points and 12 rebounds to lead Golden State to its 36th straight

regular-season home win, over the Heat.

Klay Thompson added 17 points to help the Warriors (36-2) get halfway to Chicago's record win total of 72 set in 1996-97 three games before the midpoint of the season.

Dwyane Wade scored 20 points and Chris Bosh and Gerald Green added 15 apiece for the Heat, who had won eight of their past 11 games here.

But these Warriors teams are far different and that showed against a resilient Heat team that battled all night but was unable to handle the depth of the Warriors despite the rare off-shooting night from Curry.

**Wizards 114, Bulls 100:** John Wall had 17 points and 10 assists to help banged-up Washington pull away from host Chicago.

Washington had seven players score in double figures in its second straight win after a stretch of five losses in six games. Ramon Sessions had 16 points, and Garrett Temple, Otto Porter Jr. and Nene scored 14 apiece.

The Wizards led by as many as 18 points while playing without key performers Marcin Gortat, Kris Humphries and Bradley Beal. Gortat was scratched with a sore left knee, Humphries missed his fourth straight game with a sore right knee and Beal remains out due to a stress reaction in his lower right leg.

Derrick Rose scored 23 points in the first of four games in five nights for the Bulls. Jimmy Butler had 19 points and seven assists, and Pau Gasol added 15 points and 10 rebounds.

# Utah, BYU opt to call off series

Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY — Utah coach Larry Krystkowiak believes his conduct during last month's heated game against BYU contributed to the decision to cancel the series next season. It's just the second time that's happened since 1909 — the other was due to World War II.

Krystkowiak said during a news conference Monday the rivalry has turned into a "venomous and toxic environment" and he's concerned for the well-being of the players. BYU guard Nick Emery was ejected from December's game for punching Utah's Brandon Taylor.

Krystkowiak called the incident "the straw that broke the camel's back" and why he approached athletic director Chris Hill about canceling the contracted game in Provo.

"I'm not describing BYU as dirty players. I'm saying, the nature of the rivalry kind of elevates everybody's emotions," said Krystkowiak, who added he's responsible for teaching discipline and self-control. "There's part of this that I'm actually protecting myself from myself. ... I almost got carried away this year when it took place. I don't need to look foolish."

Krystkowiak said things have gotten worse on the court in the last 3-4 years, even mentioning a particularly aggressive game by former Ute Cedric Martin. He used adjectives such as "disgusting", "dangerous", "nasty" in addition to "venomous and toxic" during the press conference.

Krystkowiak was asked if he considered other options besides canceling, such as meeting with BYU coach Dave Rose to find a solution.

"I didn't think that's an option, personally," Krystkowiak said. "Look at the pattern of behavior. What has changed? I never [received] an apology for anything. "We have three straight years, and if you think I'm going to call and say, 'Can you tone it down a little bit? Can we meet and have coffee?' That's not realistic. Not in my arena."

The coach also lamented a perceived lack of remorse. He said he and Taylor never received apology phone calls, though Rose apologized immediately after the game to Krystkowiak. Emery put out an apology statement the next day after he was suspended for a game.

Krystkowiak said he doesn't have an answer as to why a conversation with Rose wasn't an option.

"It's kind of like Teddy Roosevelt's comment about being in the arena with the sweat and blood on your face as opposed to the critics," he said. "That's where I'm at."

Hill attended the press conference and continued to support the decision. He said the "toxicity is a little higher" in men's basketball than other sports — which is why other series' will continue.

Utah Gov. Gary Herbert tweeted last week "Play the game" and the speaker of Utah's House of Representatives Greg Hughes even suggested state lawmakers might see if they could do something to encourage or require that the game be played.

"They've got a lot more challenges," Hill said. "They know that and we know that. That's become kind of a joke. In reality, they have to do more important things."

Worthen and BYU athletic director Tom Holmoe both released statements Monday that expressed disappointment in Utah's decision.

# Canucks put an end to Panthers' run

Associated Press

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — The longest winning streak in Florida Panthers history ended with a power-play goal and a few postgame punches.

Daniel Sedin scored his second of the night with a shot off the crossbar and past Roberto Luongo at 2:21 of overtime, and the Vancouver Canucks beat Florida 3-2 on Monday to stop the Panthers' 12-game run.

With the Canucks celebrating on the ice and the Panthers heading to their dressing room, the teams came together near the benches with a lot of pushing and shoving. Vancouver forward Derek Dorsett engaged backup goalie Al Montoya before players from both sides began throwing punches as officials tried to break up the scrum.

"One of their guys came over to our bench and tried to punch one of our guys," Luongo said. "You have 60 minutes to fight anybody on our team that's willing and able, but he wants to do it after the game."

Dorsett said one of the Panthers yelled something that Henrik Sedin deemed "unacceptable."

"[The Sedins] don't get mad too often and they were pretty mad," Dorsett said. "I saw Montoya and [Florida defenseman Alex] Petrovic jawing with them and trying to squirt them with water so I skated over to intervene and Montoya took a cut at me so I took a cut at him."

Panthers coach Gerard Gallant was yelling at Canucks assistant Glen Gulutzan during the melee, but the teams were eventually separated.

"You want to get in there and stick up for those guys," said Vancouver rookie forward Jake Virtanen, who had his team's other goal. "I don't really know

what happened. I know there was a lot of guys in there."

The postgame spat somewhat overshadowed Daniel Sedin's winner on a great shot with Jaromir Jagr off for hooking. With his 346th goal, Daniel Sedin tied Markus Naslund's franchise record.

"He was an idol growing up," Daniel Sedin said after scoring his 19th of the season. "He meant so much to us when we came into this league."

Jacob Markstrom made 26 saves for Vancouver (17-16-10), which finished 4-2-1 on its longest homestand of the season.

Jussi Jokinen and Jonathan Huberdeau had the goals for the Panthers (26-12-5), who were looking to become just the ninth team in NHL history to win 13 straight games.

"We could have won this game 4-1, but sometimes the breaks, they don't go in your favor," said Luongo, who made 27 saves but had his nine-game winning streak snapped. "We had a bunch of breaks during the streak. A couple went against us tonight and we're on the wrong side of the score."

Virtanen beat Luongo to the short side to get the Canucks even with 2:38 left in regulation.

**Kings 4, Red Wings 2:** Anze Kopitar had a power-play goal and three assists, and Alec Martinez scored the tiebreaking power-play goal early in the third period of host Los Angeles' seventh win in nine games.

Tyler Toffoli scored his 20th goal and Jonathan Quick made 25 saves as the Kings pushed their Pacific Division lead to 11 points with a gritty win over the Red Wings, whose four-game winning streak ended.

Milan Lucic had two assists and Dwight King added an empty-net goal for the

Kings.

Tomas Tatar and Alexey Marchenko scored late in the first period in Detroit's first loss on its six-game road trip, which ends Thursday at Arizona.

Jimmy Howard stopped 27 shots after getting pulled from his previous two starts, but the former starter remained winless in six appearances since Dec. 3. He hasn't won a road game since Nov. 21.

**Rangers 2, Bruins 1:** Jesper Fast scored on a deflection in front with 1:42 to play and New York rallied to beat visiting Boston.

Derick Brassard also scored in the third period and Henrik Lundqvist made 32 saves, including a highlight-reel stop on Max Talbot, as the Rangers beat the Bruins for only the fourth time in 12 meetings (4-8).

Jimmy Hayes scored for the Bruins, and Tuukka Rask had 28 saves. Boston is 2-6-1 in its last nine games.

It marked the first time this season the Rangers overcame a deficit at the start of the third period and won in regulation. They were 0-11-2 entering the game.

**Sharks 5, Flames 4:** Joel Ward scored midway through the third period to help San Jose hold off host Calgary.

Joe Thornton, Joonas Donskoi, Logan Couture and Brent Burns also scored for the Sharks. Martin Jones finished with 31 saves — 15 in the third period.

Sean Monahan, Dennis Wideman, Sam Bennett and Michael Ferland scored for the Flames, who have lost four of their last five at home after winning a franchise-record 11 straight at the Saddledome. Karri Ramo had 13 saves.

Burns' power-play goal at 5:12 of the third broke a 3-all tie. Ward scored 5 minutes later to give San Jose a two-goal lead.