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US, China spar over N. Korea, South China Sea

Associated Press

BEIJING — The United States and China sparred Wednesday on how to deal with North Korea's latest nuclear weapons test and ease rising tensions over territorial disputes in the South China Sea.

After meeting for more than four hours in Beijing in what they both termed "constructive" and "candid" discussions, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi nonetheless presented sharply opposing positions on the two issues at a news conference.

Kerry acknowledged that "our differences will continue to test us" but stressed that the world benefits when the United States and China are able to work together, including on the Iran nuclear deal and climate change.

On North Korea, Kerry said the United States wanted new U.N. Security Council action that would impose "significant new measures" to punish Pyongyang for its latest test earlier this month and boost pressure on it to return to disarmament talks.

"There's been a lot of talk about North Korea through these past years. Now we believe is the time for action that can bring North Korea back to the table," Kerry said.

Wang said China agreed on the need for a new resolution, but suggested that Beijing would not support new sanctions. "Sanctions are not an end in themselves," he said. "The new resolution should not provoke new tension in the situation, still less destabilize the Korean peninsula."

China is North Korea's most important ally, chief trading partner and a key source of economic assistance. While it condemned the latest test, Beijing has balked at imposing harsh sanctions that could destabilize the hard-line communist regime.

Kerry noted that sanctions had brought Iran to the nuclear negotiating table. "With all due respect," he said, "more significant and impactful sanctions were put in place against Iran, which did not have a nuclear weapon than against North Korea, which does."

"All nations, particularly those who

seek a global leadership role, or have a global leadership role, have a responsibility to deal with this threat," he said, referring to China.

Kerry said the sides agreed on the need for a strong new resolution on North Korea and to accelerate talks on what that would entail.

"It's good to agree on the goal," Kerry said. "But it's not enough to agree on the goal. We believe we need to agree on the meaningful steps necessary to get to the achievement of the goal to the negotiations that result in denuclearization."

For his part, Wang also took umbrage at U.S. complaints that China is not doing as much as it can with the leverage it has on North Korea to stop the destabilizing behavior. He noted that China's position has been consistent in opposing North Korea's nuclear weapons program and supporting a diplomatic resolution to the matter.

"For many years China has been working hard to implement these," he said. "We have delivered on our obligation."

Wang said China's position is "clear

cut" and "responsible."

"Our position will not be swayed by specific events or the temporary mood of the moment," he said. "We reject all groundless speculation or distortion of China's position."

Kerry, who after meeting with Wang was set to see State Councilor Yang Jiechi and President Xi Jinping, also called on China to halt land reclamation and construction of airstrips in disputed areas of the South China Sea, steps that have alarmed its smaller neighbors.

"I stressed the importance of finding common ground among the claimants and avoiding the destabilizing cycle of mistrust or escalation," Kerry said.

Wang denied that China was doing anything other than protecting its territorial sovereignty.

He rejected accusations from the United States and others that China was not interested in peaceful resolutions to the disputes or militarizing the areas. "We cannot accept the allegation that China's words are not being matched by actions," Wang said.

Libya may become next front in war against Islamic State

By JOHN VANDIVER

Stars and Stripes

The United States is considering "decisive" military action against Islamic State fighters entrenched in Libya, but delivering a fatal blow to the militant group will likely require more than airstrikes, experts say.

Many questions remain to be answered about any U.S. involvement in a country that has been embroiled in factional fighting since U.S.-led airstrikes four years ago helped to topple the regime of Moammar Gadhafi, who was captured and slain by rebels.

"What is the strategy?" asked Shashank Joshi, a security analyst with the Royal United Services Institute in London. "One-off degradation? Is there a ground component? Who provides the forces? There are lots of unanswered questions."

Speaking recently, Gen. Joseph Dunford, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, did not offer details about the plan now under review, but he hinted at potential escalation in Libya that would likely involve an intensification of surveillance of Islamic State fighters and airstrikes like those conducted by the U.S.-led coalition in Iraq and Syria, where the group has its roots.

"It's fair to say that we're looking to take decisive military action against ISIL in conjunction with the political process" in Libya, Dunford told a group of traveling reporters last week, using an abbreviation for the radical group. "The president has made clear that we have the authority to use military force."

The U.S., along with key allies, is now examining military plans that would aim to strike hard against Islamic State militants in Libya, who have taken advantage of the

lawlessness to gain a foothold there.

The fear is that the Islamic State can exploit the chaos in Libya to build another sanctuary - this time in an oil-rich country awash in weaponry that borders Western-backed Egypt and Tunisia - that could serve as a springboard to Europe only 300 miles across the Mediterranean to the north.

A decision on the plan, which involves allies such as France, the United Kingdom and Italy, is "weeks" rather than "hours" away, but the goal is to "put a fire wall" between the Islamic State fighters in Libya and other extremist groups in Africa, Dunford told The New York Times.

But in Libya, the U.S. and its allies will encounter a fighting environment that is every bit as complicated as Iraq and Syria - if not more so, experts say. Shifting alliances among extremist groups and the many militias that hold battle space in Libya will make decisive action difficult, particularly with a reliance on airstrikes.

"Libya is a mess," said Patrick Skinner, a former CIA case officer with the Soufan Group, a prominent global security firm. "The militias and extremist groups are aligned and at odds at different times. There's so many of them. It's like Syria, but with a more local established militia flair. And there is no clear line of demarcation between them."

Most of those militias sprouted up in Libya as local defense forces during the Arab Spring uprising against Gadhafi. After the uprising succeeded, the militias refused to hand over weapons. Instead they flourished, in large part because the U.S. and its allies declined to send a stabilization force to Libya, believing the weak central government could establish control on its own.

But any militia that helps a Western coalition could be viewed as foreign lack-

eys, which could damage their credibility on the ground.

The presence of other religious extremist groups, such as Ansar al-Sharia and al-Qaida, add more complications. In Libya, airstrikes with the aid of U.S. special operations spotters on the ground could blunt Islamic State momentum, not deliver a decisive result, according to experts.

Instead, airstrikes could end up repeating the same mistakes of years ago - creating another power vacuum that some other Islamic extremist constellation could fill.

"But as seen in Syria, it's an expensive way to buy time," Skinner said of airstrikes. "It will soften them up but won't remove them from the towns it controls."

Meanwhile, chaos in Libya is drawing in more and more fighters from the region. There are now an estimated 3,000 Islamic State militants operating in Libya, concentrated mainly in the coastal town of Sirte, Gadhafi's hometown.

The U.S. has been conducting routine surveillance, launching occasional strike missions against high-value targets, and has quietly deployed special operators to survey the landscape and work with Libyan government partners.

In November, the U.S. conducted an airstrike in Libya that killed the country's top Islamic State leader. Nearly two years ago U.S. special operators in Libya captured a key suspect in the 2012 attack against U.S. interests in Benghazi in which the U.S. ambassador and three other Americans died.

Joshi, the security analyst, said Dunford's comments indicate a growing consensus among the U.S. and its allies in Europe - where officials are concerned extremists could join the steady stream of migrants crossing from Libya

to European shores - about the need for some form of military action in Libya.

The West has long had plans to work with Libyan security forces in an expansive training regimen, but years of internal political strife have put such plans on hold.

U.S. Africa Command's Gen. David Rodriguez and others have said that a condition for deeper engagement is reconciliation between rival Libyan government factions.

AFRICOM declined to comment on specific operations or planning, but officials on Wednesday said the command continues to assess Islamic State activity in Libya.

"I'll tell you that AFRICOM stands ready to perform the full spectrum of military operations as required," said Lt. Cmdr. Anthony Falvo, an AFRICOM spokesman.

While questions remain about how enduring a recent U.N.-brokered deal between Libya's rival governments will be, the still-fragile political bargain could be a trigger for more Western involvement.

Airstrikes could help contain fighters in Libya, but quarantining the militants to Libya may not be possible, Joshi said. Already, groups aligned with the Islamic State have sprouted in places such as Tunisia and the Sinai Peninsula. Other groups, such as Boko Haram in Nigeria, have pledged allegiance to the group, but there is little evidence that Boko Haram has anything beyond domestic ambitions.

Still, despite the complications on the ground, Libya's emergence as a hub for militants demands a response, Skinner said. "As horrible as the prospect is of doing action in Libya, the prospect and consequences of letting Libya fall deeper into chaos are far worse."

Arrest of Ore. standoff leaders leaves 1 dead

Associated Press

BURNS, Ore. — Federal and state officials were restricting access on Wednesday to the Oregon refuge being occupied by an armed group after one of the occupiers was killed during a traffic stop and eight more, including the group's leader Ammon Bundy, were arrested.

The group, which has included people from Arizona and Michigan, seized the headquarters of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge on Jan. 2. They want federal lands turned over to local authorities. The confrontation came amid increasing calls for law enforcement to take action against Bundy for the illegal occupation of the wildlife refuge.

Details of the fatal encounter were sparse. It happened as Bundy and his followers were heading to a community meeting Tuesday afternoon in John Day, about 70 miles north of Burns.

Arianna Finicum Brown confirmed that her father, Arizona rancher Robert "LaVoy" Finicum, was the man killed, the Oregonian reported. The 55-year-old was a frequent and public presence at the refuge, often speaking for the group at news conferences.

"This is where I'm going to

breathe my last breath, whether I'm 90, 95 or 55," Finicum told The Associated Press on Jan. 5. "... I'm going to not spend my days in a cell."

The FBI and Oregon State Police would only say the man killed in the police shooting was wanted by federal authorities, and said no more information would be released pending identification by the medical examiner.

Jason Patrick, one of the leaders of the occupation, told radio station Oregon Public Broadcasting that five or six group members remain inside the refuge.

For weeks law enforcement vehicles have been noticeably absent from roads surrounding the refuge. Wednesday, however, marked cars were dotted throughout the region. The FBI and Oregon State Police said they were setting up checkpoints and allowing only ranchers who own property in specific areas to pass.

Brand Thornton, one of Bundy's supporters, said he left the refuge Monday and wasn't sure what those remaining would do. "The entire leadership is gone," he told the AP in a telephone interview. Thornton called the arrests "a dirty trick" by law enforcement.

Navy vet scammed US for disability

Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. — A Navy veteran scammed federal agencies out of more than \$1.5 million by exaggerating his multiple sclerosis, claiming he needed a wheelchair to get around when he was actually playing golf and baseball and taking part in a grueling foot race, prosecutors said.

A jury in South Carolina found Dennis Paulsen guilty Monday in one of the largest fraudulent disability compensation claims for a single person in the history of the Department of Veterans Affairs, U.S. Attorney Bill Nettles said. An attorney for Paulsen did not return a message seeking comment.

Paulsen, 45, was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis and discharged from the Navy in the early 1990s, according to the federal government. Unsatisfied with his monthly benefit from the VA, prosecutors said Paulsen began claiming more severe disabilities, telling government officials that he couldn't use his hands or feet. He said he couldn't leave his

home, required daily medical care and had to use a wheelchair. Simultaneously, according to the government, Paulsen convinced officials at the Social Security Administration that he was entitled to disability benefits from that agency.

Paulsen continued to lead an active lifestyle, the government said. When he moved to Blythewood, S.C., Paulsen bought a home that was not wheelchair-accessible and stopped going to specialists for his multiple sclerosis.

In 2014, a "concerned citizen" called the Veterans Administration, reporting that Paulsen wasn't as impaired as he appeared, the U.S. attorney said in a news release. Using surveillance video, undercover agents and family photographs provided by Paulsen's now-ex-wife, the government built a case. At his seven-day trial, several doctors testified on behalf of Paulsen, who testified in a wheelchair. Paulsen faces up to 20 years in prison and half a million dollars in fines, along with forfeiture of the more than \$1.5 million he received.

2 anti-abortion activists cited for fake licenses

Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas — Two anti-abortion activists who made undercover videos about Planned Parenthood are accused of using fake driver's licenses to infiltrate the group, indictments made public Tuesday show.

David Daleiden and Sandra Merritt allegedly used California driver's licenses they knew were false "with the intent to defraud and harm another," the documents indicate.

The videos that surfaced last year accused Planned Parent-

hood of illegally selling fetal tissue to researchers for profit. The footage provoked outrage among Republican leaders nationwide and prompted investigations by Republican-led committees in Congress and by GOP-led state governments.

Planned Parenthood officials said the videos were misleading.

The Houston grand jury that indicted the activists also investigated Planned Parenthood and concluded that the nation's largest abortion provider committed no wrongdoing.

Both of the activists face a charge of tampering with a governmental record, a felony that carries a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison. Daleiden was also indicted on a misdemeanor count related to purchasing human organs. The indictment on that count was not immediately available Tuesday.

The activists, who live in California, plan to go to Houston's Harris County Jail, where they will be processed and allowed to post bond, said Murphy Klasing, an attorney for Daleiden.

Klasing said he did not know

when that will happen. Bond for Daleiden and Merritt was set at \$11,000 and \$10,000, respectively.

Daleiden plans to plead not guilty to the charges, Klasing said. He declined to discuss the specific nature of the charges.

The video footage showed people pretending to be from a company called BioMax that procures fetal tissue for research. Planned Parenthood has said that the fake company sent an agreement offering to pay the "astronomical amount" of \$1,600 for organs from a fetus.

Broncos inspired by Ware's speech on eve of title game

Associated Press

Before playing the game of his life, DeMarcus Ware gave a speech that inspired his Broncos teammates on the eve of their beat-down of Tom Brady in Sunday's 20-18 victory over the New England Patriots in the AFC championship game.

"It was goosebumps," Aqib Talib said.

Afterward, the All-Pro cornerback turned to strong safety T.J. Ward and told him it was a shame Ware didn't deliver that monster motivational talk just before kickoff.

"It doesn't matter. I'm going to feel it in the morning," was Ward's retort, according to Talib, who called it "a hell of a speech. It really touched everybody."

The easygoing but hard-working Ware spoke about how he'd been playing in the league for 11 years and had yet to reach a Super Bowl.

And how he wasn't about to let either the opportunity or Brady slip from his grasp.

"You could see everybody was focused, it really touched everybody who was in that meeting," Talib said. "That's what D-Ware does. He speaks from his heart and his message was definitely felt."

Coach Gary Kubiak tapped Ware on Saturday and asked him to deliver the speech "because he knows I'll get up there and speak in a minute about what's on my heart," Ware said. "The night before the game, I always talk to the guys, but I'll have one player address the football team before we call it a night," Kubiak said. "I let DeMarcus do that. I could sit here all day and talk about it, but he was just tremendous for this team. He basically told them how much the opportunity to possi-

bly play for a Super Bowl meant to him and how much it meant for him to be a part of the team.

"It was very powerful."

Ware went to the weight room to collect his thoughts before talking and there on the wall was the phrase, "Iron Sharpens Iron."

Ware had his theme.

He would talk about how players stepped up when he and Peyton Manning missed time with injuries, when safeties David Bruton Jr. and Omar Bolden and tackles Ryan Clady and Ty Sambrailo all went on IR.

"That was the grit of the whole season," Ware said.

"We melted down that metal," he told the team. "The only way you're going to make metal hard, is if you get it done."

Then, he pulled out the first Super Bowl trophy the franchise had ever won, the silver treasure that team owner Pat Bowlen handed to John Elway on Jan. 25, 1998.

"I sat it on the table," Ware said.

"And it just got really quiet."

Ware looked around.

"I saw in all the guys' eyes how they felt, what they felt, because I felt the same way," Ware said. "From that point, I just knew how important it was to those guys."

More silence, some exhales.

"It was a big, emotional night," Ware said, "and the guys carried it over into the game."

They hit Brady 23 times — more than he'd been hit in at least a decade — and 16 times more than Aaron Rodgers was walloped during the worst game of his career, in Denver on Nov. 1.

Sending Peyton Manning back for another shot at the title and Ware to his first Super Bowl was sweet for their teammates.

"I think it's win one for Peyton, win one for D-Ware," receiver Demaryius Thomas said. "And it would be nice to get one for everybody else, too."

Manning missed seven starts with a tear in the plantar fascia near his left heel and Brock Osweiler stepped in and kept the Broncos rolling right along.

Ware also missed a good chunk of the season — five games and parts of three others — with a bad back and a balky knee, and Shaq Barrett replaced him and helped keep Denver's defense atop the NFL.

Ware and Manning watched Denver's first win over the Patriots, a 30-24 overtime thriller on Nov. 29, from the equipment room adjacent to the Broncos' lockers. And they spent many an hour together in the trainer's room getting treatment and talking about making it back for a shot at Super Bowl 50.

"We had to get well. We had to have our full team," Ware said. "Everybody bought in, helped and pitched in like Shaq when I was hurt and Brock when Peyton was hurt. The other guys are the same way. Now getting all of the guys back and winning the game, you look on the sideline and say, 'You know what? We did it.'"

"Now you celebrate a little bit, the confetti goes off. You're the AFC champion, but now, to me, it's like what have you done for me lately?" Ware said. "I'm looking forward to the next game."

And his teammates eagerly await his next speech.

Broncos' Manning hints at retirement

Associated Press

DENVER — Peyton Manning isn't saying that Super Bowl 50 is his grand finale. He's just saying it could be.

NFL Network cameras caught an intriguing exchange between Manning and New England coach Bill Belichick after Denver's 20-18 win over the Patriots in the AFC championship game on Sunday.

When they embraced, Manning leaned in and told Belichick, "Hey listen, this might be my last rodeo. So, it sure has been a pleasure."

Belichick responded, "You're a great competitor ..."

Neither spoke of their exchange afterward.

Earlier this month, Manning said, "I'd be lying if I said I'm not thinking about that," when asked if this could be it for him.

The five-time MVP's season ends Feb. 7 in the Super Bowl against Carolina.

There are other signs that Manning is preparing as if he could ride into retirement next month.

He let his little boy stand beside him during his news conference after the AFC championship, just as he had taken him to the sideline before one of the games he missed in December.

These are things the manically focused Manning never had done before.

Long after the delirious crowd disappeared Sunday night, Manning walked through the north end zone at Sports Authority Field with his family, picked up pieces of thin blue and orange confetti and took in the scene, including the giant scoreboard in the south end zone that read, "Next Game: Super Bowl 50."

Pushing 40, Manning will be the oldest quarterback to start a Super Bowl when he takes the field for his 293rd career game, including 27 postseason appearances.

It's a chance for Manning to cap his most maddening season by becoming the first starting QB to win Lombardi Trophies for two different teams.

No. 18's 18th NFL season was his most trying. It included a rash of injuries and insults and saw him serve as a scout team quarterback for the first time ever and a backup QB for the first time since his freshman year at Tennessee.

Bothered by a left foot injury, Manning threw just nine TD passes and 17 interceptions in nine starts, but he was 7-2 in those games, one of the losses coming against Kansas City on Nov. 15 when he left the game injured.

He missed the next seven starts but won his starting job back from Brock Osweiler on Jan. 3 when he entered in the third quarter against San Diego and ignited a stagnant, mistake-prone offense.

Manning led four scoring drives and the Broncos' 27-20 win earned them the AFC's No. 1 seed.

British players make mark at Aussie Open

Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia — In keeping with the way this Australian Open has been going, Andy Murray was asked following a quarterfinal win Wednesday about the state of his game. And then, invariably, about the integrity of his sport.

Murray and a much lesser-known British player, Johanna Konta, advanced to the semifinals Wednesday. Murray beat David Ferrer 6-3, 6-7 (5), 6-2, 6-3 to reach the semifinals at a Grand Slam for the 18th time. The 24-year-old Konta had a 6-4, 6-1 win over Chinese qualifier Zhang Shuai.

It's the first time since the Australian Open in December 1977 that that two British players (John Lloyd and Sue Barker) have advanced to the final four of any major.

Konta is playing in her first Australian Open main draw, after losing in qualify-

ing rounds three years in a row. She had a first-round win over No. 8 Venus Williams and beat No. 21 Ekaterina Makarova in straight sets in the fourth round.

She has won fans at Melbourne Park with her athleticism and mental composure on the court and good humor and a polite humility in interviews after winning. Born in Australia but living in Britain since her early teens, Konta also has Hungarian citizenship and calls herself a "tri-citizen."

Murray is impressed.

"She's done incredible," he said. "Another very comfortable and solid win today. Not easy, either. She created that chance by beating the seeds, and she deserves to be where she is."

Konta, the first British woman to reach a Grand Slam semifinal since Jo Durie at the 1983 U.S. Open, will play Angelique Kerber, who beat two-time champion Victoria Azarenka 6-3, 7-5.

Six-time champion Serena Williams and

No. 4-ranked Agnieszka Radwanska will meet in the other women's semifinal, also on Thursday.

The No. 2-ranked Murray, who has lost four finals at Melbourne Park, will meet Milos Raonic in the semifinals. The 25-year-old Canadian beat Gael Monfils 6-3, 3-6, 6-3, 6-4 in a night match, continuing his strong form that saw him beat Roger Federer in the Brisbane International final and French Open champion Stan Wawrinka in the fourth round here.

Defending champion Novak Djokovic and Federer will contest the other semifinal on Friday.

Since Day 1, the Australian Open has been overshadowed by media reports alleging tennis authorities had failed to thoroughly investigate match-fixing.

On Wednesday, Day 10, the governing bodies of tennis announced they will commission an independent review of their anti-corruption unit to restore "public confidence in our sport."



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Thunder edge Knicks in OT

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Kevin Durant heard all about Golden State and San Antonio the last few days, and isn't bothered the NBA's best have been hogging all the headlines.

"We just try to worry about us and what we could do every single day to get better," he said.

Hard to imagine him being much better than he was Tuesday.

Durant scored a season-high 44 points and grabbed 14 rebounds, and the Oklahoma City Thunder beat the New York Knicks 128-122 in overtime.

Durant hit the tying jumper with 16.2 seconds left in regulation, then scored seven points in overtime to surpass the 43 points he had against Orlando on Oct. 30, a game that went to two overtimes.

One was all the Thunder needed this time, as Durant hit four straight free throws in the final half-minute to finish 16 for 18 from the line.

"Just be calm in those situations, man," Durant said. "Worst that can happen is you lose the basketball game."

He wouldn't let them.

Russell Westbrook finished with 30 points, 10 assists and eight rebounds for the Thunder, who bounced back from a loss to Brooklyn on Sunday to win for the eighth time in nine games. Oklahoma City never trailed in OT after Westbrook opened the scoring with a basket.

"We've been here before," Westbrook said. "We have a lot of older guys that know what to do and we did a good job of playing the right way."

Langston Galloway scored 21 points for the Knicks, who played without injured leading scorer Carmelo Anthony. Derrick Williams added 19 points and 10 rebounds, but the Knicks couldn't hold on after leading by 11 in the fourth quarter.

Durant helped wipe that lead away, then did it again when the Knicks recovered to go back ahead by four in the final minute of regulation.

"I've been watching him growing up now the past few years, learning his game," Knicks rookie Kristaps Porzingis said. "He

just did what he does. That's KD."

Serge Ibaka had 12 points and 17 rebounds for the Thunder, who got a boost with the earlier-than-expected return of starting center Steven Adams from a sprained right elbow that was expected to keep him out for at least two more games. He had nine points and eight boards.

Arron Afflalo scored 17 points for the Knicks but shot 6-for-21, with the potential winner going in and out before the regulation buzzer.

Anthony sat out the Knicks' third straight loss because of soreness in his surgically repaired left knee. Lance Thomas returned from a three-game absence with his own sore left knee to replace Anthony in the lineup.

The Knicks took a 91-88 lead through three quarters, then opened the fourth with eight straight points to go up by 11 with 9½ minutes to play. Cameron Payne hit a couple of three-pointers to steady the Thunder before Durant heated up later in the period.

He made a couple of three-pointers and a driving dunk past Porzingis, but the Knicks seemed to have withstood his rally when Williams' dunk put them up 113-109 with 59 seconds remaining.

Ibaka scored on an offensive rebound, and Afflalo missed before Durant tied it with a jumper. The Knicks nearly won it, but Afflalo's turnaround jumper from the corner went in and out just before the buzzer.

76ers 113, Suns 103: Ish Smith had 20 points and nine assists and Robert Covington scored 19 points to lead host Philadelphia.

Once 1-30 on Dec. 23 and challenging for the worst record in NBA history, the Sixers have since gone 6-9 and might not even end up with the worst record in the league.

Raptors 106, Wizards 89: All-Star starter Kyle Lowry put up 29 points before leaving with an injury in the final minutes and host Toronto downed Washington for its ninth straight win, matching a franchise-best mark.

Lowry left and went up the tunnel to-

ward the Raptors locker room with what appeared to be an injured hand with just under four minutes to go in the fourth quarter. He briefly returned before trainers escorted him back under the stands.

Clippers 91, Pacers 89: Chris Paul scored 26 points and J.J. Redick added 19 as Los Angeles held off a late Indiana comeback.

The visiting Clippers played without All-Star forward Blake Griffin, who was sent home after breaking his shooting hand in a scuffle with equipment manager Matias Testi.

Indiana lost its third straight despite having Paul George finish with 31 points and 11 rebounds.

Heat 102, Nets 98: Dwyane Wade and Chris Bosh each scored 27 points, leading visiting Miami over Brooklyn.

Wade also had eight assists and four rebounds. Justise Winslow added 13 points and seven rebounds for the Heat.

Bucks 107, Magic 100: Giannis Antetokounmpo dunked eight times and scored 25 points as host Milwaukee, with coach Jason Kidd back on the bench, sent Orlando to its seventh straight loss.

Kidd missed 17 games after having surgery on his right hip Dec. 21. In his return, he spent a lot of time walking along the sideline as Milwaukee rallied from a 16-point deficit.

Trail Blazers 112, Kings 97: C.J. McCollum scored 18 points, Damian Lillard had 15 points and 13 assists, and host Portland shut down red-hot DeMarcus Cousins.

Portland had seven players score in double figures. Gerald Henderson scored 15 points, while Mason Plumlee had 12 points and eight rebounds for the Blazers.

Mavericks 92, Lakers 90: Dirk Nowitzki hit the tiebreaking jumper with 2.1 seconds to play, and the Mavericks hung on to beat the host Lakers.

Nowitzki scored eight of his 13 points in the fourth quarter as the Mavericks snapped a two-game skid with their 10th consecutive victory over Los Angeles.

Top-ranked OU wallops Texas Tech

Associated Press

NORMAN, Okla. — Buddy Hield scored 30 points to help No. 1 Oklahoma defeat Texas Tech 91-67 on Tuesday night.

Hield, the nation's No. 2 scorer, made 9 of 12 shots, including 5 of 8 three-point attempts, and 7 of 8 free throws. It was his seventh game with 30 or more points this season.

Isaiah Cousins scored 19 points, Jordan Woodard added 15 and Khadeem Lattin had a career-high eight blocks for the Sooners (17-2, 6-2 Big 12), who remained in first place in the conference.

Oklahoma, which leads the nation in three-point percentage, made 12-for-23 from beyond the arc and shot 53 percent overall.

The Sooners matched a school record with 14 blocked shots and held Texas Tech (12-7, 2-6) to 32 percent shooting.

Justin Gray scored 20 points, Devaughntah Williams had 12 and Matthew Temple added 11 for Texas Tech.

No. 7 Xavier 75, No. 10 Providence 68: Jalen Reynolds had 15 points and 11 rebounds, and the visiting Musketeers held off a late rally for their first road win over a Top Ten team in 20 years.

Trevon Bluiett added 15 points for Xavier (18-2, 6-2 Big East).

With Bluiett battling late foul trouble and James Farr already fouled out, the Friars (17-4, 5-3) used a 16-5 run to cut a 17-point deficit down to 64-58.

No. 9 West Virginia 70, Kansas St. 55: Jonathan Holton had 14 points and 11 rebounds to lead the host Mountaineers to a sweep of the season series.

It was Holton's second double-double in three games for West Virginia (17-3, 6-2 Big 12).

Justin Edwards had 11 points for Kansas State (12-8, 2-6), which cut West Virginia's lead to single digits in the second half just once.

No. 11 Virginia 72, Wake Forest 71: Darius Thompson hit a three-pointer at the buzzer to give the visiting Cavaliers the victory.

Malcolm Brogdon scored 28 points and Anthony Gill added 17 for Virginia (16-4, 5-3 Atlantic Coast Conference). The league's top three-point shooting team shook off a miserable night on the perimeter, hitting four threes in the final minute to pull out a most unlikely victory.

Wisconsin 82, No. 19 Indiana 79 (OT): Nigel Hayes scored 31 points, Ethan Happ added 25 and the host Badgers snapped the Hoosiers' 12-game winning streak.

Wisconsin (12-9, 4-4 Big Ten) missed several chances in the closing minutes of overtime to put the game out of reach after Bronson Koenig and Jordan Hill each went 1-for-2 at the free-throw line.

South Carolina 84, Mississippi State 74: Michael Carrera had a career high 34 points and 15 rebounds and the host Gamecocks outlasted the Bulldogs.

South Carolina (18-2, 5-2 Southeastern Conference) bounced back from a weekend loss at Tennessee and used Carrera's stellar showing to avoid its first back-to-back losses this season.

Georgetown 74, Creighton 73: D'Vauntes Smith-Rivera scored 19 points, including two key free throws with 6.2 seconds left, to help the host Hoyas rally past the Bluejays.

Creighton (14-7, 5-3 Big East) went on a 10-2 run for a 64-53 lead with five minutes left. L.J. Peak's reverse layup with 3:46 remaining ended Georgetown's field goal drought of five-plus minutes and the Hoyas (13-8, 6-2) trailed 66-57.

Fleury helps Penguins shut out Devils

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Marc-Andre Fleury stopped 25 shots for his fourth shutout of the season and the surging Pittsburgh Penguins beat the New Jersey Devils 2-0 on Tuesday night for their third straight win.

Sidney Crosby got his 17th goal of the year for the Penguins. The two-time MVP has scored in each of Pittsburgh's last seven home games, the longest home scoring streak of his career.

Phil Kessel added an insurance goal, and the Penguins have won four of five to draw even with the Devils for eighth place in the Eastern Conference heading into the All-Star break.

Cory Schneider made 29 saves for the Devils.

Panthers 5, Maple Leafs 1: Aleksander Barkov and Vincent Trocheck scored power-play goals and host Florida rolled into the All-Star break on another good note by topping Toronto.

Reilly Smith and Jussi Jokinen each had a goal and an assist for Florida, which improved to 20-0-1 when scoring at least three times.

Hurricanes 5, Blackhawks 0: Riley

Nash scored twice, Jeff Skinner had a goal and an assist and host Carolina routed Chicago in the final game before the All-Star break for each team.

Carolina outshot the reigning Stanley Cup champions 16-5 in the first period, taking a 3-0 lead and chasing goalie Corey Crawford.

Sabres 3, Senators 2: Standout rookie Jack Eichel scored twice to erase a one-goal deficit and Buffalo came back to beat host Ottawa.

Eichel tied it 2-2 with 6:12 left in the second period, then got the winner 1:08 into the third to help the Sabres end a three-game slide.

Blue Jackets 5, Canadiens 2: Brandon Dubinsky and Cam Atkinson each had a goal and an assist to help visiting Columbus beat Montreal and sweep a home-and-home.

Boone Jenner, Scott Hartnell and Brandon Saad also scored for the Blue Jackets.

Ducks 6, Bruins 2: Corey Perry scored his 20th goal and added an assist for Anaheim in a win over host Boston.

Shea Theodore, David Perron and Ryan Kesler also each had a goal and an assist,

and Kevin Bieksa and Mike Santorelli also scored for the Ducks.

Jets 5, Coyotes 2: Rookie Nikolaj Ehlers had a hat trick and Dustin Byfuglien added two goals and an assist to help Winnipeg beat visiting Arizona.

Veteran winger Blake Wheeler assisted on all of Ehlers' goals, and Ehlers' first hat trick extended his point streak to four games. Brad Richardson and Anthony Duclair scored for Arizona.

Predators 2, Canucks 1: James Neal scored late in the third period to lift Nashville over host Vancouver.

Pekka Rinne stopped 28 shots and Craig Smith had the other goal for the Predators, who improved to 3-0 on a four-game Western Conference road swing that concludes Wednesday in Calgary.

Sharks 6, Avalanche 1: Joe Thornton had two assists to become the 33rd player to reach 1,300 career points, and host San Jose extended its point streak to 10 games with a win over Colorado.

Thornton assisted on goals by Tomas Hertl and Joe Pavelski to reach the milestone and send the Sharks into the All-Star break on their longest point streak since a 10-game run during the 2010-11 season.