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Trump threatens Iran, Iraq as tensions rise

The Washington Post

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. — President Donald Trump served a bellicose brew of threats, rebukes and contempt on Sunday as he escalated tensions in the Middle East and awaited Iran's possible retaliation for the U.S. killing of one of its top generals.

Trump projected a wartime posture as he wrapped up his holiday vacation here, reiterating that if Iran took military action against the United States he may order attacks on Iranian cultural sites, which could constitute a war crime under international law. He vowed on Twitter to "quickly & fully strike back, & perhaps in a disproportionate manner."

Trump threatened Iraq as well. He countered the Iraqi parliament's move Sunday to try to expel foreign troops, including U.S. forces, by telling reporters that he would respond by imposing "very big sanctions" on the nation and demanding that Iraq reimburse the United States for the billions of dollars it had invested in a major air base there.

Should Iraq force out the Americans, Trump said, "We will charge them sanctions like they've never seen before, ever. It'll make Iranian sanctions look somewhat tame."

He added that he would impose "very big sanctions" on Iraq "if there's any hostility, that they do anything we think is inappropriate."

Trump also flouted protocols at home, making a mockery of his necessity to advise Congress of military action by writing on Twitter that his tweets would serve as official notification of strikes.

As leaders in capitals around the world monitor the fallout from last week's U.S. drone strike that killed Iranian Maj.

Gen. Qasem Soleimani, Trump let loose in all directions without regard to law or convention or even policy. He was characteristically pugnacious, appearing to be acting on the theory that bold, even belligerent threats would compel the Iranians to cower or relent.

"The United States just spent Two Trillion Dollars on Military Equipment. We are the biggest and by far the BEST in the World! If Iran attacks an American Base, or any American, we will be sending some of that brand new beautiful equipment their way ... and without hesitation!" the president wrote in a tweet posted just past midnight from Mar-a-Lago, Trump's seaside club in Palm Beach, where he celebrated Christmas and New Year's.

But Trump's rhetoric alarmed congressional leaders who worry that he has been making erratic decisions devoid of grand strategy and without wise counsel. The president's vow to target Iranian sites of historic and cultural significance prompted particular concern.

On Twitter late Saturday, Trump said that the United States was targeting 52 Iranian sites, representing the 52 American hostages taken by Iran four decades ago, and that some of those are "a very high level & important to Iran & the Iranian culture."

The 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property bans the targeting of cultural sites with military action; there is a provision that allows for a waiver due to "military necessity." Iran has 24 locations on the U.N. list of cultural world heritage sites.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, who appeared across the Sunday public affairs shows, struggled to explain Trump's

warning. He did not directly state whether cultural centers in Iran would be considered fair targets, but insisted that any U.S. action would be legal.

"We're going to do the things that are right and the things that are consistent with American lives," Pompeo, a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy, said on CNN's "State of the Union." "If the Iranian leadership makes a bad decision, we hope that they won't. But when they do, America will respond."

In a separate interview on CBS's "Face the Nation," Pompeo said Trump's reference to the 52 potential target sites in Iran was "entirely consistent" with the administration's message of de-escalation.

"Iranian leadership needs to understand that attacking Americans is not cost-free," Pompeo said during that interview. "Setting out conditions that say these are our expectations, these are the things that America is expecting from you and if you don't do them, the cost will be clear and direct."

A few hours later, however, Trump contradicted Pompeo by doubling down on his threat of striking cultural sites.

"They're allowed to kill our people," he told reporters aboard Air Force One during his flight home to Washington. "They're allowed to torture and maim our people. They're allowed to use roadside bombs and blow up our people. And we're not allowed to touch their cultural site? It doesn't work that way."

Trump's tough talk is emblematic of a president who has flouted the tenets of international and U.S. law on war crimes. He has insisted that enhanced interrogation tactics such as waterboarding work, suggested killing terrorists'

families to fight Islamic State and two months ago cleared three members of the U.S. armed services accused or convicted of war crimes over objections from senior military officials.

Trump's threat drew fierce rebukes from Democratic lawmakers and former national security officials, as well as some Republicans.

"Targeting civilians and cultural sites is what terrorists do. It's a war crime. Trump is stumbling into a war of choice," tweeted Sen. Chris Murphy, D-Conn., a member of the Foreign Relations Committee. "A war entirely of his making. A war that will get thousands of Americans killed. Congress must stop him."

Rep. Will Hurd, R-Texas, said Sunday night on MSNBC's "Kasie DC": "We shouldn't be attacking cultural sites and I don't see our military planners suggesting or identifying sites to hit. ... Going after cultural sites is not something that I would advise or I think should happen."

Former U.S. national security officials said the Pentagon would not target cultural property because it would violate domestic and international laws.

"It would be a war crime. DOD has very professional planners who take their obligations and fidelity to law seriously," said Kelly Magsamen, a former official at the National Security Council and the Pentagon who is now at the Center for American Progress, a liberal think tank. "Any military planner, any U.S. soldier would know that. The fact that the president of the United States doesn't know that is profoundly frightening to me. If he does know it and he's still saying it, that's even worse."

Vows of revenge echo at Soleimani's funeral

Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran — Iran's supreme leader wept Monday over the casket of a top general killed in a U.S. airstrike in Baghdad, his prayers joining the wails of mourners who flooded the streets of Tehran demanding retaliation against America for a slaying that's drastically raised tensions across the Middle East.

The funeral for Revolutionary Guard Gen. Qassem Soleimani drew a crowd said by police to be in the millions in the Iranian capital, filling thoroughfares and side streets as far as the eye could see. Although there was no independent estimate, aerial footage and Associated Press journalists suggested a turnout of at least 1 million.

Authorities later brought his remains and others to Iran's holy city of Qom, turning out another massive crowd.

It was an unprecedented honor for a man viewed by Ira-

nians as a national hero for his work leading the Guard's expeditionary Quds Force. The U.S. blames him for the killing of American troops in Iraq and accused him of plotting new attacks just before his death Friday. Soleimani also led forces in Syria backing President Bashar Assad in a long war.

His death already has pushed Tehran to abandon the remaining limits of its 2015 nuclear deal with world powers as his successor and others vow to take revenge. In Baghdad, the parliament has called for the expulsion of all American troops from Iraqi soil, something analysts fear could allow Islamic State militants to mount a comeback.

Soleimani's daughter, Zeinab, directly threatened an attack on the U.S. military in the Middle East while also warning President Donald Trump, whom she called "crazy."

"The families of the American soldiers ... will spend their

days waiting for the death of their children," she said to cheers.

Her language mirrored warnings by other Iranian officials who say an attack on U.S. military interests in the Middle East looms. Iranian state television and others online shared a video that showed Trump's American flag tweet following Soleimani's killing turn into a coffin, the "likes" of the tweet replaced by over 143,000 "killed."

Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei prayed over the caskets of Soleimani and others at Tehran University after a brief mourning period at the capital's famed Musalla mosque. The mosque was where prayers were said over the body of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the founder of the Islamic Republic, after his death in 1989.

Khamenei, who had a close relationship with Soleimani and referred to him as a "liv-

ing martyr," broke down four times in tears while offering traditional Muslim prayers for the dead.

"Oh God, you took their spirits out of their bodies as they were rolling in their blood for you and were martyred in your way," Khamenei said as the crowd wailed. Soleimani will be buried Tuesday in his hometown of Kerman.

Demonstrators burned Israeli and U.S. flags, carried a flag-draped U.S. coffin or displayed effigies of Trump.

Some described Trump himself as a legitimate target.

Mohammad Milad Rashidi, a 26-year-old university graduate, predicted more tension ahead.

"There will be more conflict in the future for sure," Rashidi said.

Another mourner, Azita Mardani, warned that Iran "will retaliate for every drop of his blood."

Soldier, 2 contractors killed in attack on Kenya base

BY JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

STUTT GART, Germany — A U.S. Army specialist from the Chicago area was among three Americans killed in a weekend attack by al-Qaida-aligned militants in Kenya, according to his family.

Spc. Henry Mayfield Jr., 23, from the Chicago suburb of Hazel Crest, was killed in the Sunday morning attack, his family told Chicago's NBC affiliate. "He loved his family and spending quality time with his siblings," Mayfield's mother, Carmoneta, told NBC 5 Sunday evening.

She said she last spoke with her son on New Year's Day over FaceTime.

"We discussed him not having to go to Somalia and he told me everything was good and safe at his base," Carmoneta

Mayfield told the network. "He told me everything would be OK. Those were his last words to me."

She also thanked hundreds of well-wishers on Facebook, asking them to keep her family in their prayers.

Mayfield joined the Army in June 2018, NBC 5 reported. His Facebook page lists him stationed at Fort Rucker, Ala.

U.S. Africa Command on Monday said a quick reaction force based out of Djibouti has arrived at the scene of the attack in Kenya to augment security at the Manda Bay airfield. The unit, known as the East Africa Response Force, arrived on Sunday.

Mayfield and two Defense Department contractors were killed in Kenya after their military base was overrun by al-Shabab fighters. The Pentagon, which waits until at least

24 hours after notification of next of kin, has not yet released the names of the victims.

Two other Defense Department personnel were injured in the attacks at the Kenyan military's Manda Bay airfield. They were in stable condition and evacuated for treatment, officials said.

The U.S. has about 200 troops in Kenya and roughly 100 non-uniformed personnel. Manda Bay airfield also is near Camp Simba, where American troops are based.

The small outposts play a role in U.S. counterterrorism operations in Somalia, where al-Shabab has been waging a yearslong insurgency against a U.S.-backed government.

The militants stormed the Kenyan compound with indirect and small-arms fire, U.S. Africa Command said. The fighters overran the base but

U.S. and Kenyan forces eventually repelled the attack.

Five U.S. aircraft were destroyed and one was damaged during the attack.

"The aircraft were a combination of fixed wing and rotary," Navy Lt. Christina M. Gibson said in a statement.

Six contractor-operated civilian aircraft were also damaged, AFRICOM said.

On Monday, Kenyan police also arrested three men who tried to force their way into a British army training camp in Kenya, The Associated Press reported. The attempted breach of the British base happened at about the same time the U.S. forces came under attack, the AP said.

Al-Shabab has carried out attacks in Kenya in the past, but this marks the first time U.S. military personnel have been killed in the country.

173rd Airborne heading to Middle East

BY NANCY MONTGOMERY
Stars and Stripes

VICENZA, Italy — Soldiers with the 173rd Airborne Brigade are deploying to the Middle East, a brigade spokesman said Monday.

“We do have troops from the brigade that are deploying to posture to defend U.S. personnel and property as directed,” said Maj. Chris Bradley, a spokesman for the Italy-based brigade.

He declined to discuss the deployment further, including how many paratroopers would deploy and where, until after a Pentagon announcement.

The deployment will add to the thousands of troops sent

to the region following a U.S. drone strike that killed Iran Gen. Qassem Soleimani and Iran-backed Iraqi militia leaders in Baghdad on Friday. The deaths unleashed calls among Iranian and Iraqi supporters for revenge.

Iranian officials have said they will retaliate following the death of Soleimani, who led the country’s elite Quds Force. He oversaw Iran’s various proxy forces in the region, some of whom have been blamed by U.S. officials for the deaths of hundreds of American troops.

Washington has accused Tehran of repeatedly attacking U.S. and partner interests through its proxies since May.

The 173rd consists of approximately 3,800 paratroopers, including two infantry battalions, a light reconnaissance battalion and a field artillery regiment.

Word of the brigade’s possible deployment first came Friday in media reports from an anonymous Pentagon source, as officials announced that some 4,000 82nd Airborne Brigade troops were headed to the region.

Like the 82nd, the 173rd Airborne Brigade is a quick reaction force.

It is tasked with being able to deploy within 18 hours. As a Europe-based unit, it must rapidly deploy while obtaining country permissions to move

through the ground and air.

The 173rd could be sent to Lebanon to guard the U.S. Embassy in Beirut, the Pentagon source said.

The USS Bataan and more than 2,000 embarked Marines with the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit are also headed to the region.

Some 5,000 American troops are deployed to Iraq to help its forces battle the Islamic State group, along with more than 3,000 U.S. civilian contractors in Iraq and Syria, U.S. Central Command figures from October show. The U.S. said Sunday it had suspended training the Iraqis and was bolstering security at bases with U.S. personnel.

Rangers deployed in response to tensions in Iran

BY COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Army Rangers will anchor a special operations task force deploying to the Middle East as part of the U.S. effort to bolster security in the region after killing Iran’s top military leader last week, defense officials said Monday.

The officials declined to identify where in the Middle East the task force will deploy, but they said the unit, like thousands of other troops tapped to deploy last week, would be in position to rapidly respond if Iran retaliated against American military positions in the region. The officials, who were not authorized to discuss the special operations deployment and talked on the condition of anonymity, also declined to say how large the deploying task force would be.

Politico reported Sunday that the task force would be built on a Ranger company, which typically includes about 150 to 200 troops. The defense officials on Monday would only confirm that the force would include several dozen troops, and it would primarily be built of Rangers.

Those special operators will join thousands of conventional troops called to deploy rapidly to the Middle East amid heightened tensions between the United States and Iran, especially after the killing of Gen. Qassem Soleimani on Thursday in a strike at the Baghdad airport. More than 3,000 paratroopers from the Army’s 1st Brigade Combat Team of the 82nd Airborne Division are also deploying, the Pentagon announced last week. Some 4,500 sailors and Marines aboard the USS Bataan, an amphibious assault ship, were also ordered to steam toward the Middle East, bypassing a planned training exercise with U.S. Africa Command, according to USNI News.

Iran has threatened violent retaliation for Soleimani’s killing. President Donald Trump warned Iran against such actions in a Saturday tweet, claiming the Pentagon had identified 52 Iranian sites that would be “HIT VERY FAST AND VERY HARD” if they retaliated.

“They attacked us, & we hit back,” Trump added in a Monday tweet. “If they attack again, which I would strongly

advise them not to do, we will hit them harder than they have ever been hit before!”

The strike on Soleimani, who as Iran’s Quds Force commander was responsible for Tehran’s activities outside its country’s borders — including training and controlling proxy forces in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Yemen. His death came after Iraqi Shia militiamen attempted to storm the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad on Dec. 31 as retaliation for U.S. airstrikes that killed some 25 militiamen. Those initial American strikes were ordered by Trump after a rocket attack on a U.S.-Iraqi base killed an American civilian contractor and wounded U.S. and Iraqi troops. The United States has blamed Iran and its proxies for that and other attacks in recent months.

The Army’s elite Rangers were among the first U.S. troops sent into Afghanistan in 2001 following the 9/11 terrorist attacks on New York City and Washington. They have faced near-constant deployments to the Middle East — including Iraq and Syria — and to Afghanistan since that initial deployment.

The 75th Ranger Regiment is the Army’s premier light infantry force, which specializes in airfield seizure and raids on high-value targets. The regiment includes three operational battalions — the 1st Battalion at Hunter Army Airfield in Savannah, Ga., the 2nd Battalion at Joint Base Lewis-McChord in Washington, and the 3rd Battalion at Fort Benning in Georgia.

Citing security concerns, the defense officials declined to confirm Monday from which battalion the Rangers would deploy.

Their deployment comes as Iraq’s parliament approved a nonbinding measure calling for the expulsion of American and other foreign troops from its country because of the Soleimani strike. The United States has about 5,200 troops stationed in Iraq, who had been primarily training Iraqi forces to fight the remnants of the Islamic State terrorist group. Those operations have been put on hold amid the tensions with Iran to ensure U.S. troops are adequately protected, according to the Pentagon.

Growing crisis in Middle East complicates large Europe drill

BY JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — The burgeoning crisis in the Middle East may complicate the Army's plans to hold the largest military exercise in a generation in Europe this year.

Defender-Europe 20, which is set for this spring, is expected to send 20,000 U.S. soldiers to Europe in the largest Army deployment to the Continent in 25 years. The units include an immediate response force from the 82nd Airborne Division that would conduct air and parachute assaults in the former Soviet republic of Georgia.

However, about 4,000 crisis response soldiers from the 82nd Airborne were dispatched to the Middle East after Iran vowed retaliatory strikes against the U.S. for the killing of Iran's Gen. Qassem Soleimani last week.

"We are monitoring the situation closely, but as of today DEFENDER-Europe 20 planning is unchanged," Beth Clemons, a USAREUR spokeswoman, said in a statement Sunday. USAREUR will "remain flexible to adjust as needed," she said.

The 82nd Airborne serves as the Army's first responders, which makes it a linchpin in crises but also a sought-after unit when it comes for training in quick reaction scenarios.

With tensions soaring between Iran and the U.S., and Iraqi lawmakers voting to kick foreign troops, including Americans, out of the country, the 82nd Airborne's immediate response force is taking up positions in various locations in the Middle East.

The Army will deploy elements of the 173rd Airborne Brigade in Vicenza, Italy, to the Middle East. Special opera-

tions troops have also deployed to the Middle East to boost military capabilities in the region, defense officials have said.

The crisis with Iran has already forced the military to cancel the African Sea Lion exercise in Morocco, which was slated to begin later this month, U.S. Africa Command said. A contingent of 4,500 sailors and Marines aboard the USS Bataan that was to join the exercise is instead moving closer to the Middle East, an unnamed defense official told USNI News on Friday.

Large exercises in Europe and the Pacific are part of a Pentagon strategy to shift focus away from the Middle East and prioritize "great power competition" with Russia and China, which Defense Secretary Mark Esper has repeatedly stated is the top priority for the U.S. military.

3 Okinawa troops were arrested for lone events

BY MATTHEW M. BURKE
AND AYA ICHIHASHI
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — Three U.S. service members were recently arrested on Okinawa in separate incidents that resulted in assault and shoplifting charges.

Petty Officer 3rd Class Ricardo Alfre Monsalvogarza, 27, of U.S. Naval Hospital Okinawa, is accused of punching his 23-year-old Japanese girlfriend in the face several times, said Okinawa Police deputy chief Hirotohi Iha. He was taken into custody at about 2 a.m. Saturday at his home in Yamazato, Okinawa City, after the couple was heard fighting.

An assault charge was referred to the Naha District Public Prosecutors Office on Sunday.

Monsalvogarza, who was still in custody Monday at Okinawa Police Station, has admitted to the charge, Iha said.

Lance Cpl. Jose Alejandro Araica, 20, of Camp Courtney, was arrested at about 6 a.m. Wednesday after being accused of choking a 25-year-old Japanese man at a bar in Matsuyama, Naha, said Naha Police deputy chief Shigenari Kinjo.

Araica, who was still in custody Monday, was intoxicated and said he doesn't remember the incident, Kinjo said. An assault charge has been referred to the Naha District Public Prosecutors Office.

Lance Cpl. Justin Delgado, 20, of Camp Kinser, was arrested just after midnight Dec. 26 after being accused of stealing a canned alcoholic beverage from a convenience store in Chatan's Ihei neighborhood, Iha said. Delgado is also accused of forcing his way into a private home about 20 minutes earlier and taking a drink from the resident's refrigerator.

Private university to pay government for role in veterans' education scam

BY CHRISTOPHER DENNIS
Stars and Stripes

A private university in New Jersey has been ordered to pay the United States government almost \$5 million to settle allegations that it defrauded the Department of Veterans Affairs by massively overcharging veterans for substandard online courses.

Caldwell University and Pennsylvania company Ed4Mil charged the government up to 30 times the tuition rate they paid for low-quality online courses, the Justice Department said in a statement.

"Caldwell University tried to hoodwink the Department of Veterans Affairs and, worse, veterans themselves, by claiming to offer online classes developed and provided by Caldwell

that were in fact marked-up offerings by an online correspondence school," U.S. Attorney for New Jersey Craig Carpenito said Friday.

Over years, they reaped over \$24 million in fraudulently obtained tuition benefits through the Post-9/11 Veterans Education Assistance Act.

Ed4Mil's role was to aggressively recruit and enroll eligible veterans in non-degree online classes that they said were developed and taught by Caldwell faculty, Carpenito's office said in a statement. The veterans instead were placed in unaccredited correspondence courses run by an Ed4Mil subcontractor, which was not eligible for GI Bill funding.

The scam cheated more than 2,500 service members out of the education they were en-

titled to, the FBI said.

"This was straight-up stealing — stealing money for veterans that was supposed to help them advance their careers and make themselves more marketable to employers after coming out of the military," FBI Special Agent James Eagleeye, who investigated the case, said on the bureau's website.

An Ed4Mil employee and an associate dean at Caldwell were each sentenced to three years of probation for their roles in the scam, Carpenito's office said. The founder of Ed4Mil, David Alvey, who was said to have masterminded the scheme, was jailed for five years, the New Jersey Attorney General's office and the FBI said.

All three defendants were ordered to pay back the \$24 million.

Golden Globes award big-screen epics

BY JOSH ROTTENBERG
Los Angeles Times

Further shaking up an already wide open awards season — and giving a boost to the kind of bold, adult-oriented studio fare that has been steadily migrating to streaming outlets — Sam Mendes' World War I epic "1917" and Quentin Tarantino's 1960s fantasia "Once Upon a Time ... in Hollywood" were the big winners at the 77th Golden Globes Sunday night.

The Hollywood Foreign Press Association gave Universal's "1917" the award for best motion picture in the drama category as well as the directing prize for Mendes, lending the film — which opens wide Friday as one of this Oscar season's late arrivals — a major leg up on the road to next month's Academy Awards.

Sony's "Once Upon a Time" topped all other films, winning best picture in the comedy or musical category and also taking home prizes for Tarantino's screenplay and for supporting actor Brad Pitt.

True to form, the Globes spreads its affection wide,

Golden Globe Award winners

Among the winners:

Best motion picture, drama: "1917"

Best motion picture, musical or comedy: "Once Upon a Time ... in Hollywood"

Best actor in a motion picture, drama: Joaquin Phoenix, "Joker"

Best actress in a motion picture, drama: Renee Zellweger, "Judy"

Best actor in a motion picture, musical or comedy: Taron Egerton, "Rocketman"

Best actress in a motion picture, musical or comedy: Awkwafina, "The Farewell"

Best director: Sam Mendes, "1917"

Best supporting actor in a motion picture: Brad Pitt, "Once Upon a Time ... in Hollywood"

Best supporting actress in a motion picture: Laura Dern, "Marriage Story"

From The Associated Press

handing out significant prizes to contenders such as Warner Bros.' "Joker" and Netflix's "Marriage Story," even as it left others — most notably, Martin Scorsese's sweeping gangster epic "The Irishman" — empty-handed.

Heading into the night, Netflix was widely expected to dominate. The streaming giant — which has long coveted a best picture Oscar and made a concerted effort to bring A-list filmmakers into its stable — boasted 17 nominations for

its films, far outpacing its nearest competitors.

But in the end, Netflix emerged with just a single win on the film side: Laura Dern took home the prize for supporting actress for her turn as a divorce lawyer in "Marriage Story." On the television side as well, despite 17 nominations, Netflix had a disappointing night, earning just one award for Olivia Colman for lead actress in a drama series for "The Crown."

Though the Globes are

renowned for delivering curveballs, if not outright head-scratchers, many of the night's winners were largely expected. Giving him a further boost in this year's fiercely competitive actor's race, Joaquin Phoenix won the award for lead actor in a drama for his turn as a troubled failed standup turned supervillain in "Joker." Renee Zellweger, who is widely considered the frontrunner in this year's lead actress race, won the award for lead actress in a drama for her performance as Judy Garland in "Judy."

On the television side, HBO topped its competitors with four wins, powered by "Succession," which won awards for best drama series and for star Brian Cox, and "Chernobyl," which won best limited series. "See Ricky, it wasn't all about Netflix," quipped "Chernobyl" star Jared Harris.

Two of the industry's most beloved figures, Tom Hanks and Ellen DeGeneres, were given lifetime achievement awards, earning standing ovations and drawing tears from the crowd.

Weinstein in court ahead of assault trial

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Harvey Weinstein and several of the women who have accused him of sexual misconduct converged Monday at the New York City courthouse where a judge and his lawyers handled the final preparations for his high-stakes trial on charges of rape and assault.

Weinstein, 67, entered the building leaning on a walker following a recent back surgery, sporting a dark suit and disheveled hair. When asked outside the courtroom how his back felt, Weinstein responded with a thin smile and a so-so gesture with his hand.

Inside, his lawyers and prosecutors spent the morning sparring about procedural matters, including how to keep publicity surrounding the trial from influencing the jury's thinking. The judge denied a motion to sequester jurors throughout the course of the trial.

Across the street, actresses and other women who say they were sexually harassed or assaulted by Weinstein dismissed him as a villain undeserving of anyone's pity.

Jury selection in the trial will start Tuesday, more than two years since the allegations first came to widespread pub-

lic attention and catalyzed the #MeToo movement.

Weinstein faces allegations that he raped one woman in a Manhattan hotel room in 2013 and performed a forcible sex act on a different woman in 2006.

He has pleaded not guilty and says any sexual activity was consensual.

Picking a jury for Weinstein's trial could take a while, in part because immense media attention on the case could mean some potential jurors already have their minds made up. Weinstein's lawyers tried to get the trial moved out of Manhattan, but a court rejected that.

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Cousins, Vikings knock off Saints in OT

Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — After tight end Kyle Rudolph emerged from a purple swarm of celebrating Vikings near the corner of the end zone, he took an opportunity to mock those who doubted quarterback Kirk Cousins' ability to come through in the clutch.

"I'm just glad Kirk can't win big games, apparently," Rudolph said. "We proved that one wrong today."

Cousins hit Rudolph with a 4-yard fade on third-and-goal in overtime, and the Minnesota Vikings pulled out a 26-20 victory over the favored Saints in the wild-card round of the NFC playoffs on Sunday.

Cousins lost his only previous playoff start in 2015 with Washington, came up short of a playoff berth on the final regular-season game a year ago and struggled in a handful of other high-profile regular-season night games.

Yet Cousins eschewed an opportunity to gloat after his pass to Rudolph — and a 43-yarder to Adam Thielen at the Saints 2-yard line three plays earlier — helped the Vikings (11-6) advance to play top seed San Francisco in the divisional round of the

playoffs on Saturday. It was Minnesota's first road playoff win since Jan. 9, 2005, when the Vikings beat the rival Packers at Lambeau Field in the wild-card round.

"I'm just happy we won," Cousins said. "It was a great, great game, two good football teams."

Saints fans begged to differ after seeing New Orleans' season end in overtime in the Superdome for a second straight year.

The latest disappointing end for the Saints (13-4) came nearly a year after New Orleans lost in the NFC championship game to the Los Angeles Rams in a game marred by missed Rams penalties late in regulation. This time, replays on video boards showed a possible push-off by Rudolph against defensive back P.J. Williams moments before he jumped to snag the winning catch.

NFL president of officiating Al Riveron said the league reviewed numerous replay angles, and while they saw contact by both players, "none of that contact rises to the level of a foul."

Saints coach Sean Payton said the Vikings "deserved to win."

Dalvin Cook gained 130 yards from

scrimmage and scored two touchdowns after missing the last two regular-season games with a shoulder injury. Cousins finished with 242 yards and one TD passing.

"Being a fourth-round pick and kind of working your way up in the league — now you win a playoff game. Guess what? You look around and you realize there's more mountains to climb," Cousins said. "You just keep chasing the next mountain and there will always be people who are going to criticize you — and that's OK."

New Orleans trailed by 10 at the start of the fourth quarter but forced overtime with Drew Brees' 20-yard touchdown pass to Taysom Hill and Wil Lutz's 49-yard field goal with 2 seconds left.

"They made more plays than we did," Payton said. "They ran the ball better than we did."

Hill was the Saints' leading rusher with 50 yards and Alvin Kamara was held to 21 yards rushing on seven carries.

"Both defenses played well," Payton added. "Shoot, here you are in overtime and they made a few plays right there at the end that obviously were significant."

Seahawks eliminate Eagles from postseason

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Jadeveon Clowney knocked out Carson Wentz. Then, Russell Wilson and the Seattle Seahawks knocked off the Philadelphia Eagles.

Wilson threw a 53-yard touchdown pass to DK Metcalf, Marshawn Lynch had a rushing score and the Seahawks beat the Eagles 17-9 in the wild-card round of the NFC playoffs on Sunday night.

"To come back here, back East, it's a long ways, we were able to do it, pull through," Wilson said. "We've been road warriors and it's exciting. We've got a great defense, too."

Making his first career playoff start, Wentz lasted two series before exiting with a head injury following a helmet-to-helmet hit from Clowney.

Nick Foles wasn't around to rescue Philadelphia this time.

"I didn't intend to hurt him. I hope he's OK," Clowney said.

Referee Shawn Smith told a

pool reporter: "He was a runner and he did not give himself up. We saw incidental helmet contact, and in our judgment, we didn't rule it a foul."

Josh McCown, 40, stepped in, becoming the oldest quarterback to make his playoff debut. But he couldn't lead the Eagles (9-8) into the end zone.

"I didn't get the job done," said McCown, who was emotional on the field afterward.

The Seahawks (12-5) lost three of their final four games, including a 26-21 defeat at home against San Francisco in Week 17 that cost them the NFC West title.

But they traveled to Philadelphia for the second time in six weeks and became the third team to win on the road this weekend, improving to 8-1 away from home this season.

Wilson threw for 325 yards and led the team with 45 yards rushing. Metcalf had seven catches for 160 yards.

The Seahawks had a season-high seven sacks from six

players.

"We made up our mind to not let them score," All-Pro linebacker Bobby Wagner said. "It was a mental thing more than execution."

Wilson drove Seattle 82 yards late in the second quarter and Lynch powered in from the 5 for a 10-0 lead.

Wilson connected with Metcalf for 26 yards and David Moore for 38 on third-down, catch-and-run passes to keep that drive going.

McCown finally got the offense going on the opening drive of the third quarter. He connected with Zach Ertz for 32 yards and Boston Scott ran 15 yards to the 5. But a false start, fumbled snap and sack followed. Jake Elliott's 26-yard field goal cut the deficit to 10-6.

The Seahawks answered quickly. Metcalf stretched to catch Wilson's deep pass, got up and tumbled into the end zone for a 17-6 lead.

"I caught the ball, I didn't feel anybody touch me," Met-

calf said. "I got back up and I wanted a touchdown. I wanted a touchdown, real bad."

Wentz was forced to watch from the sideline following knee surgery when Foles led the Eagles to the franchise's first Super Bowl title two years ago. He was out with a back injury last year when Foles led Philadelphia to a wild-card win in Chicago.

The Eagles were decimated by injuries throughout the season and had to rely on five offensive players off the practice squad during a four-game winning streak that sealed the NFC East title.

Wentz started all 16 games for the second time in his four seasons and played his best down the stretch with backups surrounding him. But he finished the season injured the same as the previous two.

"I'm disappointed for him," Pederson said. "I wanted this for him."

Source: Cowboys tab McCarthy as coach

Associated Press

The Dallas Cowboys didn't take long to settle on Mike McCarthy as their coach after waiting a week to announce they were moving on from Jason Garrett.

McCarthy, who won a Super Bowl at the home of the Cowboys nine years ago as Green Bay's coach, has agreed to become the ninth coach in team history, a person with direct knowledge of the deal said Monday.

The person spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the team hasn't announced the decision.

McCarthy interviewed over the weekend, before the Cowboys made the announcement Sunday that Garrett wouldn't return after 9½ seasons.

Dallas missed the playoffs at 8-8 with high expectations in a make-or-break season for Garrett, whose contract expires next week.

Green Bay made nine trips to the postseason in his 13 years under McCarthy. The 56-year-old was out of football this season after getting fired during what ended up being a second straight losing season for the Packers in 2018.

McCarthy led the Packers to at least 10 wins in eight of his first 11 seasons, including four trips to the NFC championship game.

Dallas hasn't been that far in the playoffs since the last of the franchise's five Super Bowl titles to finish the 1995 season. The Cowboys missed the playoffs six times in Garrett's nine full seasons.

McCarthy also interviewed with Cleveland, Carolina and the New York Giants. He went 125-77-2 in the regular season with the Packers and 10-8 in the playoffs. The Cowboys have just three playoff wins since their last championship.

With two-time MVP Aaron Rodgers as his quarterback,

McCarthy reached the playoffs eight straight years from 2009-16, beating the Garrett-led Cowboys two times in that stretch.

The Cowboys believe they have their next franchise quarterback in Dak Prescott, who was the 2016 NFL Offensive Rookie of the Year after replacing the injured Tony Romo and never relinquishing the starting job.

Prescott, whose rookie contract is expiring, and two-time rushing champion Ezekiel Elliott have made the playoffs twice in four seasons and got their first playoff victory in 2018 after losing their post-season debut to Rodgers and McCarthy with Dallas as the NFC's top seed in 2016.

McCarthy was fired after an embarrassing loss at Lambeau Field to Arizona, a defeat that all but sealed a second straight year without a postseason trip for the Packers.

With a mandate to get the Cowboys past the divisional round for the first time in nearly 25 years, Garrett couldn't build on a 3-0 start. Dallas went 4-8 in the next 12 games with a pair of three-game losing streaks.

The Cowboys still had a chance to make the playoffs with a win at Philadelphia in Week 16, but the 17-9 loss handed their postseason fate to the Eagles for the final week. Philadelphia beat the New York Giants 34-17, eliminating Dallas despite its 47-16 win over Washington.

Dallas finished 8-8 four times under Garrett, who had an 87-70 record, including 2-3 in the playoffs, in nine-plus seasons.

Despite never winning more than one playoff game in a season, the 53-year-old Garrett has the club's second-longest tenure behind Tom Landry.

Roundup

Eller completes Caps' stunning OT victory

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Washington Capitals never believe they're out of a game. On Sunday, they showed why.

Lars Eller scored with 2:59 remaining in overtime after the Capitals rallied from two goals down in the final minute of regulation, completing a stunning 5-4 victory over the San Jose Sharks.

T.J. Oshie tied the game with 15 seconds left. Eller also assisted Jakub Vrana's second goal of the game with 47 seconds remaining as the NHL-leading Capitals became just the seventh team in league history to win after trailing by two inside the final minute.

"We just keep working," Oshie said. "We've got everyone tugging the rope. And when you have that, it's fun."

Evander Kane had his third career hat trick for San Jose, which never trailed before Eller's game-winner.

"That's why they lead the league and that's why they have the most points," said Sharks coach Bob Boughner, "because they find ways to win games. As disappointed as I am, I'm pretty content in how our 5-on-5 game looks."

Logan Couture scored an empty-netter with a minute remaining, appearing to seal the game. But Capitals coach Todd Reirden left the net empty, and Washington responded with its sixth and seventh goals of the season when playing in 6-on-5 situations.

"We have a plan," Reirden said of those late-game successes. "We believe in those players. They are players that are not fazed by pressure. They're anxious to get out there and try to be the guys that tie up the game."

Lightning 3, Hurricanes 1: Steven Stamkos had a goal and an assist, Nikita Kucherov had two assists and visiting Tampa Bay got its seventh straight victory.

Andrei Vasilevskiy stopped 28 shots and Mitchell Stephens and Brayden Point also scored for the Lightning.

Andrei Svechnikov scored for Carolina, which lost its second straight and fell to 2-2 on its seven-game homestand.

Flames 5, Wild 4 (SO): Dillon Dube scored in the seventh round of the shootout to give visiting Calgary a win over Minnesota. David Rittich stopped six of seven Wild shooters, and Derek Ryan also scored in the shootout for the Flames, who are 4-0 in tiebreakers this season.

Milan Lucic, Travis Hamonic, Michael Stone and Mark Giordano scored for Calgary. Rittich finished with 30 saves.

Marcus Foligno scored twice, and Kevin Fiala and Jordan Greenway also had goals for Minnesota, which finished 1-2-1 on a four-game homestand.

Panthers 4, Penguins 1: Mike Hoffman had a goal and an assist, rookie Chris Driedger stopped 31 shots and visiting Florida ended an eight-game losing streak on Pittsburgh ice.

Florida bounced back from a loss to Buffalo on Saturday by winning in Pittsburgh for the first time since Jan. 20, 2014.

Tristan Jarry finished with 31 saves, but the Penguins looked out of gas at times while playing for the third time in four nights.

Blackhawks 4, Red Wings 2: Adam Boqvist snapped a third-period tie, Dylan Sikura scored his first NHL goal and host Chicago rallied past Detroit.

Dylan Strome also scored for Chicago, which won for the fourth time in five games.

Ducks 5, Predators 4 (SO): Adam Henrique had two goals and an assist, Ryan Getzlaf got the deciding goal in the fifth round of the shootout and also had three assists, and host Anaheim beat Nashville.

Daniel Sprong had a goal and an assist, and Cam Fowler also scored to help the Ducks end a three-game losing streak.

NBA roundup

Lakers block Pistons' upset bid

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — After Dwight Howard blocked Andre Drummond's shot with a perfect combination of timing and athleticism, he wagged a Mumbo finger at the uproarious Staples Center crowd.

The rest of the Lakers took off on a fast break that left them with a double-digit lead over Detroit in the fourth quarter.

Although that lead vanished and the game got a whole lot scarier, the Lakers' huge block party propelled them to another win.

LeBron James had 21 points, 14 rebounds and 11 assists, and Anthony Davis had eight of the Lakers' 20 blocked shots in their fifth straight victory, 106-99 over the Detroit Pistons on Sunday night.

By the time the Lakers' three big men were done swatting almost everything they could get their hands on, the Lakers had blocked more shots than any NBA team since March 2001.

"We were just protecting the paint," said Davis, who finished two blocks shy of his career high. "Last game (against New Orleans), we gave up 60-some-

thing points in the paint. It's something we don't like doing, and we tried to make an emphasis tonight on protecting the paint."

Heat 122, Trail Blazers 111: Goran Dragic had 29 points and 13 assists, Bam Adebayo added 20 points on 9-for-10 shooting and host Miami never trailed.

Dragic tied a career best with seven three-pointers. Derrick Jones Jr. scored 19 points for the Heat, who got 14 from Kendrick Nunn and 12 points in 22 minutes from little-used James Johnson — who was called upon largely because Miami was without Jimmy Butler.

Tyler Herro scored 11 points for Miami, as did Meyers Leonard in his first game against his former team.

Damian Lillard led Portland with 34 points and 12 assists. Former Heat center Hassan Whiteside, booed almost every time he touched the ball, finished with 21 points and 18 rebounds for Portland. Anfernee Simons scored 19 points off the bench.

Miami improved the NBA's best home record to 17-1 — two wins shy of its home total for 41 games last season — and is 10-

0 after losses.

Both teams were missing starters unexpectedly. Miami was without Butler, who was ruled out because of back soreness. Portland's CJ McCollum was out with an upper-respiratory infection.

Timberwolves 118, Cavaliers 103: Gorgui Dieng scored 22 points, Shabazz Napier had 21 and Minnesota blew a 25-point lead before regrouping to win at Cleveland.

The Cavaliers rested disgruntled forward Kevin Love and may have lost rookie Kevin Porter Jr. for an extended period with a knee injury.

Andrew Wiggins came back after missing four games with the flu and scored 15 points for the Timberwolves. They won for just the fourth time in 16 games.

Dante Exum, recently acquired in a trade with Utah, scored a career-high 28 points — 24 in the second half — for Cleveland, which dropped its fourth in a row amid drama surrounding Love, whose absence for rest came a night after he showed frustration toward teammates in a loss to Oklahoma City.

Clippers 135, Knicks 132:

Montrezl Harrell scored 34 points, Paul George and Lou Williams added 32 apiece and host Los Angeles bounced back from an ugly loss to beat New York.

A day after a 26-point loss to Memphis in another matinee, the Clippers had a least three players score at least 30 points for the first time in franchise history.

Marcus Morris led the Knicks with 38 points. RJ Barrett added 24.

Grizzlies 121, Suns 114: Jonas Valanciunas scored 30 points, Dillon Brooks added 19 and Memphis won at Phoenix.

Valanciunas shot 12-for-16 from the field, and Brooks made five three-pointers before fouling out in the final minute. Jaren Jackson Jr. had 15 points and eight rebounds. The Grizzlies have won five of their past eight games, including two of three on its current trip.

Devin Booker led the Suns with 40 points to break the franchise record for consecutive games with at least 30 with six. Charles Barkley and Charlie Scott shared the previous mark.

Top 25 roundup

Winston leads No. 14 Spartans past No. 12 Wolverines

Associated Press

EAST LANSING, Mich. — Cassius Winston made his last home game against Michigan memorable with a sensational performance his in-state rivals would rather forget.

Winston had a career-high 32 points and nine assists, leading No. 14 Michigan State to a 87-69 victory over the 12th-ranked Wolverines on Sunday.

"It was one of the greater performances that this building has seen," said coach Tom Izzo, who has witnessed a slew of games at Breslin Center as a head coach and assistant over the last three decades.

"I don't think any of us will ever be able to appreciate what that kid has gone through and how he has handled it."

Winston has had a heavy heart for nearly two months because his younger brother, Zachary, died after being hit by a train.

The senior star has played while grieving and that seemed to adversely affect some of his performances earlier in the season, but he was at his best in the first of two scheduled games against Michigan.

"Cassius is a superb, phenomenal player," Wolverines coach Juwan Howard said. "He does an excellent job of reading whatever defense you throw at him. Give him

credit. He's crafty. There's a reason why he was the player of the year in the Big Ten."

Winston was 11-for-19 overall and 8-for-11 at the line. He had just two turnovers despite having the ball in his hands during much of his 38-minute outing.

No. 20 Dayton 80, Saint Joseph's 67: At Philadelphia, Trey Landers and Ryan Mikesell each scored 18 points as the Flyers fought off some sluggishness and pulled away from the Hawks.

Ibit Watson and Obi Toppin added 15 points apiece and Jalen Crutcher scored 10 for Dayton. Ryan Daly scored 22 points to lead Saint Joseph's.