

NATO commander touts 'hard power'

By JOHN VANDIVER

Stars and Stripes

STUTT GART, Germany — Drastic changes are coming for NATO, and the U.S.-led alliance's top American officer in Europe says members must face this fact: "Hard power is a reality."

Supreme Allied Commander Gen. Christopher Cavoli, speaking at a security forum in Sweden on Monday, outlined the steps allies are taking, many of which stem from how Russia's unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine is unfolding.

"The scale of this war is out of proportion with all of our recent thinking, but it is real," Cavoli said. "And we must contend with it."

The implication is that while "soft power" diplomacy and economic measures favored by some allies in recent years have a role, being skilled with tanks, artillery and all manner of firepower must take precedence to defend against Russia.

For NATO, implementing its overarching strategy, known as Defense and Deterrence of the Euro-Atlantic Area, is central to its efforts as allies prioritize collective territorial

defense, Cavoli said.

The work revolves around tailoring military plans by region with updated details on how strategic areas will be defended.

"Of course, these plans are going to go ahead and drive a tremendous amount of change in the alliance," Cavoli said.

For example, command and control structures meant for putting defense plans into action will have to be altered to "make them fit for a new purpose," he said.

A new force model to produce larger and more combat-ready forces is also in the works. That will involve having troops ready on a standing basis, as opposed to the rotational, schedule-based model allies have had the luxury of using during the past 20 years.

The new force model, which Cavoli described as "promising," is now being fleshed out with troop commitments from member states.

On top of that, a new force structure will be installed that will specify the amounts and types of equipment needed across the alliance to conduct operations, he said.

Such plans will play a role in NATO being

able to reinforce eight battlegroups that have been set up along NATO's eastern flank. Other changes on the way include a more integrated air and missile defense posture in the east, Cavoli said.

The Russia-Ukraine war has shown the West that it needs to produce weaponry and munitions at a large scale, he added. In Ukraine, the Russians have expended on average well over 20,000 artillery rounds per day, Cavoli said.

Cavoli, an Army officer who also serves as head of the Stuttgart-based U.S. European Command, said that future means prioritizing hard power, a comment that could go against the grain of the sensibilities of some member states such as Germany.

In Berlin's previous dealings with Moscow, fostering economic ties and downplaying Russia's military threat was the norm in the years leading up to the 2022 invasion.

But soft power isn't sufficient in deterring adversaries like Russia, Cavoli said.

"The great irreducible feature of warfare is hard power. And we have to be good at it," he said.

Calif. storms bring threat of mudslides, drenching rain

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — California saw little relief from drenching rains Tuesday as the latest in a relentless string of storms continued to swamp roads and batter coastlines with high surf, turning rivers into gushing flood zones and forcing the evacuation of thousands in towns with histories of deadly mudslides. At least 14 people have died since the storms began last week.

The storm prompted a few tornado warnings early Tuesday and also was expected to bring heavy snow to the Sierra Nevada a day after dumping up to 14 inches of rain at higher elevations in central and Southern California.

Miles of Sierra highways were subject to chain requirements and closures due to whiteout conditions, and avalanche warnings were posted in the backcountry. The Eastern Sierra's Mammoth Mountain ski resort reported 4.5 to 5.5 feet of snow, with more expected.

After a brief respite, another storm was expected to barrel into the state beginning Wednesday, adding to the misery and further saturating areas already at risk of flooding and debris flows.

The storms threatened coastal and riverside towns and left more than 200,000 homes and businesses without power early Tuesday, according to the web-

site poweroutage.us, which tracks utility reports. The weather service issued a flood watch through Tuesday for the entire San Francisco Bay Area, along with Sacramento Valley and Monterey Bay. Areas hit by wildfires in recent years faced the possibility of mud and debris sliding off denuded hillsides that have yet to fully recover their protective layer of vegetation.

The storm — the latest extreme weather event to kick off 2023 — was expected to bring enough rain to exacerbate ongoing flooding and heighten the risk of mudslides, forecasters said.

Forecasters also warned southwestern California could

see 60-mph wind gusts at the peak of the storm, while some areas could receive rainfall of a half-inch per hour.

The death toll from the storms that began last week climbed from 12 to 14 on Monday, after two people including a homeless person were killed by falling trees, state officials said.

California state highway authorities said late Monday night that parts of U.S. and state highways were closed because of flooding, mud or rockslides, heavy snow or car spinouts and truck crashes. The closures included northbound lanes of U.S. 101, a key coastal route, and sections of U.S. 6 and State Route 168.

US seizes smuggled rifles in Gulf of Oman

By J.P. LAWRENCE
Stars and Stripes

The U.S. Navy accused Iran of smuggling weapons and war supplies for at least the third time in recent months, following the seizure of more than 2,000 rifles from a fishing vessel transiting the Gulf of Oman.

A boarding crew from Navy patrol coastal ship USS Chinook stopped the vessel carrying 2,116 AK-47 rifles Jan. 6 along a maritime route from Iran to Yemen, Naval Forces Central Command said in a statement Tuesday.

“This shipment is part of a continued pattern of destabilizing ac-

tivity from Iran,” Vice Adm. Brad Cooper, commander of NAVCENT and the 5th Fleet, said in the statement.

The Navy detained six Yemeni citizens, whose repatriations are in progress, the NAVCENT statement said.

The patrol coastal ship USS Monsoon and the destroyer USS The Sullivans supported the interdiction, the statement said.

Last week’s seizure comes after more than 170 tons of potentially explosive chemicals were seized on a fishing vessel in November. And last month, 50 tons of ammunition rounds, fuses and

rocket propellants were captured on another vessel, 5th Fleet said.

Analysts have said Iran and the United States and its allies in the Middle East are locked in a cold war of armed proxy groups, covert attacks and influence peddling.

The U.S. has levied numerous sanctions on Iran in recent months, accusing Tehran of carrying out a brutal national crackdown on protests.

National security adviser Jake Sullivan accused Iran on Monday of “contributing to widespread war crimes” in Ukraine due to Tehran’s sales of combat drones

to Russia, The Associated Press reported.

The U.S. has said that smuggling to militant groups has increased in recent years in the busy shipping lanes of the Middle East.

Iran has been accused of transferring rifles, rocket-propelled grenades and missiles to Houthi rebels in Yemen, despite a U.N. arms embargo.

The U.S. Navy said it hopes to build a 100-vessel fleet of unmanned surface ships, or drone boats, to patrol the waters of the Middle East by the end of the summer.

Marines plan new force in Okinawa to counter China

By MATTHEW M. BURKE
AND KEISHI KOJA
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — The Marine Corps is planning a new quick-reaction force on Okinawa to counter Chinese maritime expansion in the region and aid in defending Japan’s remote southwestern islands, a Japanese newspaper reported Tuesday, citing unnamed U.S. and Japanese government sources.

The new Marine littoral regiment, typically about 2,000 Marines, could be established by 2025, the Yomiuri Shimbun reported Tuesday.

The unit will reportedly not add to the total number of Marines on Okinawa. About 18,000 Marines, sailors and their families already live on Okinawa, according to the Marine Corps Installations Pacific website.

The unit, if the plan moves forward, will be the second of three proposed for the Pacific, according to Yomiuri. The first, the 3rd Marine Littoral Regiment, was launched in Hawaii in March.

The littoral regiments are a key

tenet of Marine Corps Commandant Gen. David Berger’s Force Design 2030 modernization effort.

The new Okinawa-based littoral regiment is reportedly on the agenda for talks Wednesday in Washington, D.C., by the Japan-U.S. Security Consultative Committee, or 2+2, according to Yomiuri. The committee is composed of Defense Minister Yasukazu Hamada and Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi of Japan and U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin.

The Japanese government is expected to agree to the plan, Yomiuri reported. It said Guam is reportedly being considered for the third planned littoral regiment.

The III Marine Expeditionary Force on Okinawa on Tuesday referred Stars and Stripes to the U.S. National Security Council for comment, “pending the conclusion of national-level leadership meetings and associated announcements,” spokesman 1st Lt. Zachary Voss said by email to Stars and Stripes.

China would likely lose in event of Taiwan invasion

By DOUG G. WARE
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — If China chose to invade Taiwan, it would likely be defeated by U.S., Japanese and Taiwanese forces, but at great cost and loss of life, according to think tank experts who conducted several war simulations.

The Center for Strategic and International Studies, a Washington-based think tank, released a report Monday that details 24 different war simulations that featured a Chinese invasion of Taiwan. Most of them ended with the island retaining its autonomy and the U.S.-led coalition victorious in defeating China.

“In most scenarios, the United States/Taiwan/Japan defeated a conventional amphibious invasion by China and maintained an autonomous Taiwan,” the 165-page report states. “However, this defense came at high cost. The United States and its allies lost dozens of ships, hundreds of aircraft and tens of thousands of service members. ... China also lost heavily and failure to occupy

Taiwan might destabilize Chinese Communist Party rule.”

The CSIS analysis concluded that “victory is therefore not enough” and recommended the U.S. “strengthen deterrence immediately.”

Tensions between the U.S. and China have been rising for years, and Pentagon officials recently identified China as the No. 1 competitor for the U.S. in terms of military capabilities and advances.

“My big takeaway here, right up front, is we need to get creative about deterring China from invading Taiwan,” said retired Air Force Lt. Gen. David Deptula, the dean of the Mitchell Institute for Aerospace Studies, another think tank based in Washington.

Deptula said Monday at an event about the release of the CSIS report that the only way China will be deterred from invading Taiwan is if there’s tremendous uncertainty about its chances for success, and if Beijing understands there will be serious consequences for doing so.

House Republicans vote to slash IRS funding

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — House Republicans began their tenure in the majority Monday by passing a bill that would rescind nearly \$71 billion that Congress had provided the IRS, fulfilling a campaign promise even though the legislation is unlikely to advance further.

Democrats had beefed up the IRS over the next decade to help offset the cost of top health and environmental priorities they passed last year and to replenish an agency struggling to provide basic services to taxpayers and ensure fairness in tax compliance.

The money is on top of what Congress provides the IRS an-

nually through the appropriations process and immediately became a magnet for GOP campaign ads in the fall claiming that the boost would lead to an army of IRS agents harassing hard-working Americans.

The bill to rescind the money passed the House on a party-line vote of 221-210. The Democratic-controlled Senate has vowed to ignore it.

Shortly before the vote, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office projected that rescinding the extra IRS funding would increase deficits over the coming decade by more than \$114 billion. That created an awkward moment for Republicans, who have been saying that

addressing deficits would be one of their top concerns in the majority. It offered an early example of how the GOP's bold promises on the campaign trail could get tangled in the messy reality of governing.

Still, the CBO's projection didn't appear to dampen Republican support. Rep. Jeff Duncan, R-S.C., said the extra IRS funding Democrats provided last year was for one purpose.

"To go after small businesses, hard-working Americans to try to raise money for reckless spending, reckless spending that has caused \$31 trillion in debt in this nation," Duncan said.

Duncan and other GOP law-

makers have routinely said the extra funding will be used to hire 87,000 new agents to target Americans, but that's misleading. The number is based on a Treasury Department plan saying that many IRS employees would be hired over the next decade if it got the money. But those employees will not all be hired at the same time, they will not all be auditors and many will be replacing some 50,000 employees who are expected to quit or retire in coming years.

"This debate about IRS lends itself to be the most dishonest, demagogic rhetoric that I have seen in the Congress at any point in time," said Rep. Steny Hoyer, D-Md.

US traffic deaths slipped in first 9 months of 2022

Associated Press

DETROIT — The number of traffic deaths on U.S. roads fell slightly during the first nine months of 2022, but pedestrian and cyclist deaths continued to rise.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates that 31,785 people were killed in crashes from January through September last year, down 0.2% from the same period of 2021.

The agency also estimates that fatalities dropped slightly in the third quarter of the year, the second straight quarterly decline after seven quarters of year-over-year increases.

Agency Acting Administrator Ann Carlson said in a statement Monday that there's still more work to do to address a crisis on the nation's roads. She urged people to drive safely and watch out for vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists.

The Governors Highway Safety Association, a group of state traffic safety officials, said the reduction in deaths is welcome, but

it follows an unprecedented two-year surge in road deaths and dangerous driving.

The number of deaths is down by only 65 from January through September.

"Today's news is a small step forward for safer roads," the group said, blaming the spike in 2020 and 2021 on unsafe driver behavior, including speeding, impaired and distracted driving and lack of seat belt use.

Fatalities began to rise two years ago when roads were largely empty due to stay-at-home orders in many states during the height of the COVID pandemic. With less traffic, speeds increased, as did reckless and impaired driving, leading to a record spike in deaths last year, authorities have said. Many people weren't wearing seat belts, the government said.

In an effort to reduce the deaths, the federal government is sending \$5 billion in aid to cities and localities to slow vehicles, carve out bike paths and nudge commuters to public transit.

Feds proposing 'student loan safety net' beside forgiveness

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The White House is moving forward with a proposal that would lower student debt payments for millions of Americans now and in the future, offering a new route to repay federal loans under far more generous terms.

President Joe Biden announced the repayment plan in August, but it was overshadowed by his sweeping plan to slash or eliminate student debt for 40 million Americans. Despite the low profile of the payment plan, however, some education experts see it as a more powerful tool to make college affordable, especially for those with lower incomes.

Education Department officials on Tuesday called the new plan a "student loan safety net" that will prevent borrowers from getting overloaded with debt.

"Student debt has become a dream killer," Education Secretary Miguel Cardona said. "This is a promise to the American people that, at long last, we

will fix a broken system and make student loans affordable."

Biden, a Democrat, is moving forward with the repayment plan even as his one-time debt cancellation faces an uncertain fate before the Supreme Court. The White House has asked the court to uphold the plan and reject two legal challenges from conservative opponents. The Biden administration submitted its brief last week, with oral arguments slated for Feb. 28.

The Education Department formally proposed the new repayment plan on Tuesday by publishing it in the Federal Register, starting a public comment period that often takes months to navigate.

If it's finalized, the proposal would give a major overhaul to income-driven repayment plans — one of several payment options offered by the federal government. The resulting plan would have lower monthly payments, an easier path to forgiveness and a promise that unpaid interest will not be added to a borrower's loan balance.

GOP calls for Biden docs review

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The top Republican on the House Intelligence Committee has requested that the U.S. intelligence community conduct a “damage assessment” of potentially classified documents found in the Washington office space of President Joe Biden’s former institute.

Rep. Mike Turner sent the request Tuesday to Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines, saying that Biden’s retention of the documents put him in “potential violation of laws protecting national security, including the Espionage Act and Presidential Records Act.”

The revelation that Biden potentially mishandled classified or presidential records could prove to be a political headache

for the president, who called former President Donald Trump’s decision to keep hundreds of such records at his private club in Florida “irresponsible.”

Biden ignored shouted questions about the matter Tuesday during a bilateral meeting with Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in Mexico.

Turner’s request came a day after the White House confirmed that the Department of Justice was reviewing “a small number of documents with classified markings.”

The documents were discovered as Biden’s personal attorneys were clearing out the offices of the Penn Biden Center, where the president kept an office after he left the vice presidency in 2017 until shortly before he launched his presiden-

tial campaign in 2019, the White House said.

“Those entrusted with access to classified information have a duty and an obligation to protect it,” said Turner in a letter to Haines. “This issue demands a full and thorough review.”

The documents were found on Nov. 2, 2022, in a “locked closet” in the office, according to special counsel to the president Richard Sauber.

Sauber said the attorneys immediately alerted the White House Counsel’s office, which notified the National Archives and Records Administration — which took custody of the documents the next day.

It wasn’t immediately clear why the White House didn’t disclose the discovery of the documents or the DOJ review sooner.

China suspends S. Korea visas for virus testing

Associated Press

BEIJING — The Chinese government suspended issuing tourist and business visas Tuesday for South Koreans — and reportedly for Japanese, too — in apparent retaliation for COVID-19 testing requirements imposed by those countries on travelers from China.

The Chinese Embassy in Seoul, in a brief notice on its WeChat social media account, said the ban would continue until South Korea lifts its “discriminatory entry measures” against China.

Japan’s Kyodo News service said the ban would also affect Japanese travelers, though there was no similar announcement from China. A Japanese Foreign Ministry official said the government was aware of the report and was holding unofficial discussions with Chinese authorities about measures being considered by Beijing.

It would be “regrettable” if restrictions are imposed, the official said, speaking on customary condition of anonymity.

China’s Foreign Ministry threatened countermeasures last week against countries that had announced new virus testing requirements for travelers from China. At least 10 in Europe, North America and Asia have done so recently, with officials expressing concern about a lack of information about rapidly spreading virus outbreaks in China.

The Chinese announcement in South Korea appeared to apply only to new applicants, and said nothing about South Koreans currently holding visas.

South Korea’s Foreign Ministry said in a statement that “our government’s step to strengthen anti-virus measures on passengers arriving from China is based on scientific and objective evidence.”

Stanford ‘harmful language’ guide nixed

The (San Jose, Calif.) Mercury News

STANFORD, Calif. — Stanford University officials have decided to cast aside a newly crafted “harmful language guide” that sent the Internet into a frenzy last month for discouraging the use of words like “American,” “Hispanic” and “cakewalk.”

The Stanford guide quickly became part of the “culture war” discourse, criticized on social media and in the media for going too far in trying to dictate politically correct speech in professional settings.

While it was conceived as a way to promote a more inclusive and welcoming environment for people of all walks of life, the guide “missed the intended mark” and “was broadly viewed as counter to inclusivity,” university spokesman Steve Gallagher said in a statement last week.

Written by the Elimination of

Harmful Language Initiative at Stanford, in partnership with People of Color in Technology and the Stanford CIO Council, the “language guide” is part of a multiphase, multiyear project to address harmful language in information technology (IT) uses only at the university. Its goal is to “eliminate many forms of harmful language, including racist, violent and biased language” in Stanford websites and code.

Gallagher said the initiative was created to address racist terms historically used in IT, such as “master” and “slave” to describe aspects of systems. The initiative’s scope of “racist terminology in technology” was later expanded more broadly as “harmful language in technology.”

The 13-page guide also discourages the use of what it describes as ableist, ageist, colonialist and culturally appropriate language, and urges code

writers to avoid words ranging from the obvious “retarded” and “spaz” to phrases that might seem more innocuous, like “brave,” “American,” “Hispanic,” “cakewalk” and “homeless person.”

“It was this expansion in scope that is at the heart of the intense recent feedback from the Stanford community and beyond,” Gallagher said. “The path forward will be determined after reviewing all recent feedback and consulting with university academic and administrative leadership.”

In a previous statement, the university made clear that the guide was not university policy and “does not represent mandates or requirements.” But that didn’t stop the Internet from going berserk over what many labeled too politically correct.

Several news outlets and publications condemned the guide, calling it “absurd” and “ridiculous.”

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Thieves steal \$300K by distracting Brink's guard

NY NEW YORK — A trio of thieves stole \$300,000 from an armored truck in a bold Brooklyn heist, grabbing a sack of cash while they distracted a Brink's guard by asking for directions, police said.

The trio struck when an armored truck pulled up to a Chase bank on Eighth Avenue and 55th Street in Sunset Park, authorities said.

The driver stayed in the truck while his co-worker, whose job it is to deliver and pick up cash, placed the bag of money on the bumper, police said.

That's when two of the crooks walked up to the worker, asking for directions, police said.

While they spoke, the third thief slipped in and grabbed the bag, police said. He ran off south on Eighth Avenue with the score, while his accomplices scattered, police said.

Feral cows face removal from national forest

NM ALBUQUERQUE — Federal authorities have a plan to remove feral cows that are roaming New Mexico's Gila National Forest and causing damage by overgrazing and trampling stream banks.

The Albuquerque Journal reported feral cattle have inhabited the forest since the 1970s and the U.S. Forest Service began its efforts to remove them in the 1990s.

The Forest Service's proposed plan would make both lethal and non-lethal methods available to remove the remaining population of unbranded

cattle, according to the Journal.

Center for Biological Diversity co-founder Todd Schulke told the Journal that his organization supports the Forest Service's approach because the alternative is conducting roundups and that still leads to many cattle being euthanized due to stress and injury.

New Mexico Cattle Growers' Association President Loren Patterson disagrees with the plan to use lethal on-site measures. He said the carcasses are left in place and the meat is wasted as opposed to the cattle going to auction, and the practice poses a risk of giving predators a taste for cattle.

Hot spring roof falls, 7 injured, cause unknown

IA BOISE — A roof collapsed on bathers at an Idaho hot spring, sending seven people to hospitals with a variety of injuries.

The injured ranged in age from 9 to 70. All were conscious and in stable condition when taken for further medical care after the collapse at Givens Hot Springs, the Owyhee County Sheriff's Office said in a statement.

Witnesses said 15 to 20 people were in the pool when pieces of wood began falling in the water, KTVB-7 reported.

"I saw the first piece of wood come down from the ceiling. I heard it snap and then the whole thing caved in," Lee Wilson said. "I got hit and knocked out and I went under the water. A firefighter saved me, and my nephew pulled me out. But it was scary."

Wilson suffered a concussion but was released from the hospital, he said.

What caused the roof collapse at the privately owned pool 20 miles southwest of Boise was unknown.

3 hurt as SUV hit small plane in highway landing

NV LAS VEGAS — A small plane clipped an SUV as it made an emergency landing on a highway north of Las Vegas, sending three people to a hospital as a precaution.

Nevada State Police said the two-seater plane was having mechanical issues and had to land on U.S. 95. The agency posted photographs on Twitter showing the SUV's windshield after it shattered from hitting the plane's wing as the aircraft was sitting on the left shoulder of the highway.

Authorities said the injuries were not life-threatening.

One southbound lane remained open as authorities conducted their investigation.

Bear chooses family's deck to hibernate

CT PLAINVILLE — A Connecticut family is letting a sleeping bear lie for now after discovering it hibernating under a backyard deck.

Vincent Dashukewich, of Plainville, told WTNH television he was shocked to see the black bear looking back at him when he went to investigate why his dog was growling.

Since then, Dashukewich has taken the advice of the Department of Energy & Environmental Protection and let the bear be as long as it is not causing problems. An agency employee said the animal would likely leave by the end of the month.

"He's been super chill, I've

gone out to check on him a few times and he hasn't really moved," Dashukewich said. "He's looked at me a few times but he's pretty calm right now."

A video of the sleepy bear posted to TikTok has been viewed millions of times.

Fake teen doctor, now 25, sentenced for new scam

FL WEST PALM BEACH — A serial grifter who gained national infamy as a teenager when he impersonated a doctor to defraud a patient is heading back to prison after pleading guilty to stealing more than \$10,000 from his employer.

Malachi Love-Robinson, 25, received a sentence of over two years and four months after pleading guilty in Palm Beach County, Fla., to grand theft and organized scheme to defraud.

Court documents showed that in 2020, Robinson was working as a salesperson for a company that connects shippers with trucking companies. Instead of having customers make payments to the company, Love-Robinson would have them send the money to accounts he controlled.

Love-Robinson first came to national attention in 2016 as an 18-year-old when he was arrested after opening The New Birth New Life Medical Center, identifying himself as "Dr. Love." He stole \$30,000 from a patient in her 80s during house calls and an additional \$20,000 from a doctor. He was arrested after he examined and prescribed treatment to an undercover police officer who was impersonating a patient.

— From wire reports



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Georgia crushes TCU for national title

Associated Press

INGLEWOOD, Calif. — Stetson Bennett flashed a wry grin as he walked off the field, stopping to hug coach Kirby Smart as the crowd roared.

It was all standing ovations and sideline snacks in the fourth quarter of college football's most lopsided title game.

In emphatic and overwhelming fashion, Georgia became the first team to repeat as College Football Playoff national champions and left no doubt the 'Dawgs are the new bullies on the block.

Bennett threw two touchdown passes and ran for two scores — in the first half — as No. 1 Georgia demolished No. 3 TCU 65-7 on Monday night.

The Bulldogs (15-0) are the first repeat champs in major college football since Alabama went back-to-back a decade ago. There appears to be a new dynasty emerging from the Southeastern Conference.

"We wanted our kids to play without fear," Smart said. "All year I told them, I said, 'We ain't getting hunted guys, we're doing the hunting, and hunting season's

almost over. We've only got one more chance to hunt,' and we hunted tonight."

TCU (13-2), the first Cinderella team of the playoff era, never had a chance against the Georgia juggernaut. Unlike Michigan in the Fiesta Bowl semifinal, the Bulldogs didn't succumb to the Hypnotoads' spell.

Georgia turned in one of the all-time beatdowns in a big game, reminiscent of Nebraska running over Florida by 38 in the 1996 Fiesta Bowl, USC's 36-point rout of Oklahoma in the 2005 Orange Bowl and Alabama's 28-point BCS blowout of Notre Dame in 2013.

But this was worse.

Too much talent. Too well-coached. Two straight titles for the 'Dawgs.

No team has ever scored more points in a national championship game, dating to the beginning of the BCS in 1998.

With 13:25 left in the fourth quarter, Smart called timeout in the middle of an offensive drive so Bennett could exit to a hero's ovation in the final game of his circuitous college career.

"That was special," said Ben-

nett, who finished 18-for-25 for 304 yards and four touchdown passes. "I'll remember that for the rest of my life."

Georgia offensive linemen were munching on chicken wings on the sideline as the game wound down. Then, for the second straight year, the Bulldogs were showered by confetti and presented a championship trophy.

The Bulldogs were a different kind of dominant this season after losing 15 NFL Draft picks from the 2021 team: not quite as stingy on defense, but more explosive on offense.

"Last year's team probably had more talent on it," Smart said. "But this year's team was different, like they had this eye of the tiger. They weren't going to lose."

Earlier in Smart's tenure at his alma mater, Georgia fans worried about whether the former defensive coordinator for Saban would be able to build an offense to match this high-scoring era of college football.

Under third-year coordinator Todd Monken, the Bulldogs have become prolific, creative and diverse offensively. They picked

apart TCU's 3-3-5 defense from all angles.

Versatile tight end Brock Bowlers had seven catches for 152 yards. Receiver Ladd McConkey caught two TDs. Georgia ran for 254 yards with seven players gaining at least 10.

The Bulldogs scored all six times they touched the ball in the first half. Twice Bennett ran it in himself; the former walk-on turned two-time national champion was barely touched on the two quarterback keepers.

He hit a wide-open McConkey for a 34-yard score in the first quarter, a perfectly executed play out of a bunched formation that had TCU's defensive backs in disarray. Bennett's 22-yard score to Adonai Mitchell was a higher degree of difficulty, dropped in over a defender who had tight coverage.

Heisman Trophy runner-up Max Duggan threw two first-half interceptions in the final game of his roller-coaster TCU career. A four-year starter who never played in a bowl before this season, Duggan led TCU on one of the most improbable runs in college football history.

Bush, Tebow make College Football Hall of Fame

Associated Press

Reggie Bush, whose Heisman Trophy victory for Southern California in 2005 was vacated because of NCAA violations, was among 18 players in the latest College Football Hall of Fame class announced Monday.

Florida quarterback Tim Tebow, who won the Heisman in 2007, was also elected to the hall by the National Football Foundation, along with Dwight Free-ney of Syracuse; Luke Kuechly of Boston College; LaMichael James of Oregon; and Michael Bishop of Kansas State.

Bush played on two national championship teams with USC in 2003 and '04, and led the Tro-

jans to another title game in 2005, a season in which he won the Heisman with a spectacular season. He ran for 1,740 yards, averaged 8.7 yards per carry and scored 19 touchdowns.

He went on to become the second overall pick in the NFL Draft by the New Orleans Saints after a college career that saw him run for 3,169 yards in three seasons, averaging 7.3 yards per carry, and score 42 touchdowns.

The NCAA later investigated USC and Bush and determined he and his family had received impermissible benefits from a marketing agent while playing for the Trojans.

The NCAA hit USC with severe sanctions in 2010 and later the Heisman Trust vacated Bush's Heisman victory and asked him to return his trophy.

While Bush is still not a Heisman winner in the official record books, he will be a Hall of Famer.

Source: Twins, Correa agree on six-year deal

Carlos Correa reversed course for a second time, agreeing Tuesday to a \$200 million, six-year contract that keeps him with the Minnesota Twins after failing to complete deals with the New York Mets and San

Francisco Giants, a person familiar with the negotiations told The Associated Press.

The deal for the All-Star shortstop could be worth \$270 million over 10 seasons if Correa remains healthy. The agreement is subject to a successful physical, the person said, speaking to the AP on condition of anonymity because the agreement was not announced.

Minnesota's deal includes options for \$25 million in 2029, \$20 million in 2030, \$15 million in 2031 and \$10 million in 2032, each becoming guaranteed if Correa has 502 or more plate appearances in the previous season.

Coach Kingsbury, GM Keim fired by Cardinals

Associated Press

TEMPE, Ariz. — The Arizona Cardinals have fired coach Kliff Kingsbury and parted ways with general manager Steve Keim after a dreadful season that saw constant unwanted headlines, a serious knee injury to star quarterback Kyler Murray and lots of losing.

Now it's time for a franchise reset — again.

"It's the hardest day in the football life, when you've got to part ways with people that you respect and appreciate all their contributions," Cardinals owner Michael Bidwill said on Monday.

The 43-year-old Kingsbury — who received a contract extension just last year — finishes his tenure with a 28-37-1 record in four seasons, including a 4-13 mark this year.

The Cardinals ended the season on a seven-game losing streak, falling to the San Francisco 49ers 38-13 on Sunday.

"I wished it could have worked out better for him," Bidwill said. "Because in terms of putting in the effort, he's a guy who deserved to have the outcome we were all expecting."

The 50-year-old Keim also received a contract extension last season. He's been with the Cardinals since 1999 and served as the team's general manager since 2013.

He took a medical leave of absence in December, but the team didn't elaborate on the reason.

Now Bidwill begins the process of looking for a new coach and general manager.

The job could be attractive to some candidates: The Cardinals already have a long-term quarterback and also possess the No. 3 overall pick in the upcoming draft.

Bidwill is a part of the NFL's Workplace Diversity Committee and said he plans to use those connections in the search.

"It's giving me a real head start," Bidwill said.

Kingsbury joins a long list of names who couldn't win enough games for one of the NFL's least-successful franchises. The Cardinals haven't won a championship since 1947 and have never had a coach last more than six seasons in more than a century of existence.

The low-key Kingsbury was Bidwill's surprise choice to lead the franchise back in 2019, replacing Steve Wilks. A few months later, the franchise selected quarterback Kyler Murray with the No. 1 overall pick in the draft.

A former quarterback himself, Kingsbury had developed a reputation for working with young quarterbacks, including Patrick Mahomes, who played for Kingsbury at Texas Tech and went on to lead the Kansas City Chiefs to a Super Bowl win.

For a while, the Kingsbury-Murray pairing looked as if it

would succeed. The Cardinals went 5-10-1 in 2019 before improving to 8-8 in 2020. The Cardinals started last season with a 10-2 record, emerging as a Super Bowl favorite, but lost four of their final five regular-season games.

They still made the playoffs, but lost to the Los Angeles Rams 34-11 in the wild-card round.

The Cardinals started this season with high expectations, but nothing went as planned. The first bad omen came when three-time All-Pro receiver DeAndre Hopkins was suspended for the season's first six games after violating the NFL's policy on performance-enhancers.

Hopkins returned after his six-game suspension in October, but the season had already gone sideways.

Then Murray was lost for the season after tearing ligaments in his knee against the Patriots on Dec. 12.

Ersson, Flyers shut out high-scoring Sabres

Associated Press

BUFFALO, N.Y. — Joel Farabee had two points and Samuel Ersson made 28 saves to lead the Philadelphia Flyers to a 4-0 win over the Buffalo Sabres on Monday night.

In his fifth start of the season, Ersson earned his first career NHL shutout against the league's highest-scoring team and gave the Flyers their fifth win in six games.

"I think that's what's been impressive about (Ersson), he's just very calm and he gets about his business," Flyers coach John Tortorella said. "It helps the team. So I'm happy for him."

Farabee's goal and assist came 1:27 apart in the first period. After Zack MacEwen opened the scoring early in the first, Farabee's goal gave Philadelphia a 2-0 lead. He then

helped set up a goal from Noah Cates that made it 3-0. Wade Allison scored about 2 minutes into the third period.

"(Farabee's) obviously such a smart player and really deceptive," Cates said. "Coming off surgery and whatnot this offseason, it maybe took him a little to get into the season, but ... he's been great for us lately, especially."

Craig Anderson made 34 saves for Buffalo, which was shut out for the first time this season and lost for just the second time in the past 10 games.

"I thought tonight our guys looked and felt emotionally drained," Sabres coach Don Granato said. "They just had a really difficult time executing things that they execute simple. They didn't look like themselves. We fought the puck all night and we didn't look fast."

Kraken 4, Canadiens 0: Vince Dunn and Eeli Tolvanen each had a goal and an assist, Martin Jones stopped 21 shots for his second shutout of the season and visiting Seattle got its fifth straight win.

Daniel Sprong and Matty Beniers also scored, and Yann Gourde had two assists in his return to his home province of Quebec. The Kraken have outscored opponents 26-8 during their winning streak.

Jones had six saves in the first period, nine in the second and six in the third to get his 27th career shutout.

Predators 3, Senators 0: Filip Forsberg had a goal and an assist and visiting Nashville won its fourth straight.

Juuse Saros made 38 saves for his first shutout of the season and the 18th of his NHL career. He has stopped 102 of

the 105 shots he's faced in the last two games — following a 64-save performance Thursday in a 5-3 win over Carolina.

Roman Josi and Jeremy Lauzon also scored.

Kings 6, Oilers 3: Kevin Fiala had two goals and two assists, Adrian Kempe also scored two power-play goals and host Los Angeles beat Edmonton.

Alex Iafallo and Viktor Arvidsson also scored as Los Angeles improved to 9-2-1 since Dec. 15. Pheonix Copley had 28 saves as he improved to 11-2-0 in 13 starts — all since Dec. 6.

Fiala had his sixth game with at least three points this season and second consecutive. It was the first time in Kings history two players scored multiple power-play goals in a game.

Bucks rally from 17 points down, beat Knicks

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Giannis Antetokounmpo could feel the Bucks playing with more energy and could sense a shift in their confidence on their three-point shots.

“Once we made one, then we made the second one,” he said. “Then we made the third one.”

And pretty soon, their 17-point deficit was gone.

Antetokounmpo had 22 points and 10 rebounds, and Milwaukee rallied in the second half and beat the New York Knicks 111-107 on Monday night.

Joe Ingles added a season-high 17 points and Brook Lopez also scored 17 for the Bucks, who made 12 three-pointers after falling behind 70-53 with five minutes remaining in the third quarter.

“I think in the long run we’re going to make a lot of those shots,” Ingles said.

Lopez made one that snapped a 97-all tie before Jrue Holiday — forced to the bench after committing three fouls in the first 4½ minutes — scored five straight Milwaukee points. The Bucks closed it out at the free throw line to snap the Knicks’ four-game winning streak and bounce back nicely after allowing a season-worst 51 points in

the first quarter of their loss to Charlotte on Friday.

Jalen Brunson scored a career-high 44 points for the Knicks, adding seven assists. Julius Randle had 25 points, 16 rebounds and five assists, but was just 1-for-12 from three-point range.

The Knicks were hoping to continue streaking to the midpoint of their schedule, having followed an eight-game winning streak and a five-game skid with four straight victories. They fell to 22-19.

Ingles, who didn’t play for the Bucks until last month after missing the first 29 games recovering from a torn ACL in his left knee, helped fuel the comeback with five three-pointers.

“It’s nice to finish a game, it’s nice to be in those situations obviously,” Ingles said.

Celtics 107, Bulls 99: Jayson Tatum scored 32 points and Jaylen Brown added 19, as host Boston beat Chicago and reached the midway point of its season with the NBA’s best record.

Grant Williams added 20 points and Al Horford had seven rebounds and eight points, including a clutch three-pointer with 24 seconds to play that helped seal the win for the de-

fending Eastern Conference champions, who are 29-12 after the first 41 games. Malcolm Brogdon scored 20 points for Boston, which played without injured point guard Marcus Smart.

Zach LaVine led Chicago with 27 points, scoring 15 in the fourth quarter while leading the Bulls’ furious comeback bid. Chicago, which had won three straight, lost DeMar DeRozan in the third quarter with a strained right quadriceps. Nikola Vucevic had 21 points and 13 rebounds for Chicago. DeRozan finished with 13 points in 23 minutes.

Nuggets 122, Lakers 109: Jamal Murray scored a season-high 34 points, Nikola Jokic recorded his 11th triple double of the season and host Denver beat Los Angeles in a game in which LeBron James sat out due to a sore left ankle.

Jokic finished with 14 points — on 5 of 5 shooting — grabbed 11 rebounds and dished out 16 assists to help the Nuggets win their 11th straight home game. It’s their longest home streak since capturing 12 in a row in 2018. Denver remains tied with Memphis for the top spot in the Western Conference.

Russell Westbrook finished

with 25 and Thomas Bryant added 17 along with 10 boards for the Lakers, who saw their five-game winning streak halted.

Grizzlies 121, Spurs 113: Tyus Jones, filling in for Ja Morant, had 24 points, Jaren Jackson Jr. added 16 and host Memphis withstood a comeback attempt by San Antonio.

Desmond Bane and Dillon Brooks finished with 15 apiece for Memphis, which played its second consecutive game without Morant, its leading scorer, who is nursing soreness in his right thigh.

Tre Jones led the Spurs with 18 points, while Josh Richardson added 16 points. Romeo Langford and Jakob Poeltl finished with 13 points each as the Spurs lost their second straight and fifth in the last six.

Pelicans 132, Wizards 112: CJ McCollum scored 34 points and Jonas Valanciunas added 27 points and 12 rebounds as visiting New Orleans beat Washington.

New Orleans (25-16), which had lost four of five, took the lead early in the second quarter and put the game away when it scored the first 15 points of the fourth quarter to take a 115-88 lead with 8:44 to play.

Nets’ Durant out at least 2 weeks with sprained right knee

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Kevin Durant has a sprained right knee and the Brooklyn Nets said he will miss at least two weeks.

Durant was hurt Sunday during the third quarter of the Nets’ 102-101 victory in Miami after the Heat’s Jimmy Butler fell into his knee. Durant grabbed at his knee and briefly remained in the game before asking to come out and going to the locker room.

He had an MRI on Monday that revealed an isolated sprain in his medial collateral ligament. The team said he would be re-evaluated in two weeks.

Durant has led the Nets to 18 wins in their last 20 games and a 27-13 record, a game behind Boston for the best record in

the NBA.

He missed 21 games last season when he sprained his left MCL in January — also when a player fell into him — and the Nets fell apart. They went 5-16, tumbling down the standings, and their poor play without him contributed to Durant’s disappointment with the franchise and trade request over the summer.

Durant eventually rescinded the request and has been playing some of the best basketball of his career this season. He is sixth in the league with 29.7 points per game and shooting a career-high 55.9% from the field. Durant passed Dominique Wilkins to move into 14th place on the NBA’s career scoring list earlier in Sunday’s game.

Now the Nets will hope to better withstand his absence, believing they are better balanced than last season under coach Jacques Vaughn.

“The strength of our team is us picking each other up and just being ready for whatever’s thrown at us,” teammate Kyrie Irving said after the game.

The Nets play again Thursday when they host Boston in a nationally televised showdown. If Durant can return soon after the next evaluation, he could be ready to play in the Feb. 19 All-Star Game in Salt Lake City. The current leading vote-getter among Eastern Conference frontcourt players had to miss the game because of injury last season.