

Biden presses G-7 leaders on China

Associated Press

CARBIS BAY, England — Leaders of the world's largest economies unveiled an infrastructure plan Saturday for the developing world to compete with China's global initiatives, but there was no immediate consensus on how forcefully to call out Beijing over human rights abuses.

Citing China for its forced labor practices is part of President Joe Biden's campaign to persuade fellow democratic leaders to present a more unified front to compete economically with Beijing. But while they agreed to work toward competing against China, there was less unity on how adversarial a public position the group should take.

Canada, the United Kingdom and France largely endorsed Biden's position, while Germany, Italy and the European Union showed more hesitancy during Saturday's first session of the Group of Seven summit, according to a senior Biden administration official. The official who briefed reporters was not authorized to publicly discuss the private meeting and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Biden held talks with France's Emmanuel Macron, who said cooperation was needed on a range of issues and told the American presi-

dent that "it's great to have a U.S. president part of the club and very willing to cooperate." Relations between the allies had become strained during the four years of Donald Trump's presidency and his "America first" foreign policy.

Biden also met with German Chancellor Angela Merkel in between Saturday's G-7 sessions, according to photographs her spokesperson tweeted. Merkel is scheduled to meet with Biden at the White House next month.

White House officials have said Biden wants the leaders of the G-7 nations — the U.S., Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Japan and Italy — to speak in a single voice against forced labor practices targeting China's Uyghur Muslims and other ethnic minorities. Biden hopes the denunciation will be part of a joint statement to be released Sunday when the summit ends, but some European allies are reluctant to split so forcefully with Beijing.

China had become one of the more compelling subplots of the wealthy nations' summit, their first since 2019. Last year's gathering was canceled because of COVID-19, and recovery from the pandemic is dominating this year's discussions, with leaders expected to commit to sharing at least 1 billion vaccine

shots with struggling countries.

The allies also took the first steps in presenting an infrastructure proposal called "Build Back Better for the World," a name echoing Biden's campaign slogan. The plan calls for spending hundreds of billions of dollars in collaboration with the private sector while adhering to climate standards and labor practices.

It's designed to compete with China's trillion-dollar "Belt and Road Initiative," which has launched a network of projects and maritime lanes that snake around large portions of the world, primarily Asia and Africa. Critics say China's projects often create massive debt and expose nations to undue influence by Beijing.

Britain also wants the world's democracies to become less reliant on the Asian economic giant. The U.K. government said Saturday's discussions would tackle "how we can shape the global system to deliver for our people in support of our values," including by diversifying supply chains that currently heavily depend on China.

Not every European power has viewed China in as harsh a light as Biden, who has painted the rivalry with China as the defining competition for the 21st century.

Pentagon getting back \$2.2B diverted to border wall

BY COREY DICKSTEIN

Stars and Stripes

The Pentagon is getting back \$2 billion of military construction funds that were diverted in recent years by former President Donald Trump to fund his signature barrier wall efforts on the U.S. southern border, President Joe Biden's administration announced Friday.

That money will be returned to its initial purpose — funding more than 60 military construction projects around the world approved by Congress, according to a statement from the Office of Management and Budget. The Pentagon, under Trump, diverted \$3.6 billion in 2019 that had been earmarked to fund 127 military construction projects under a seldom-used authorization for the Pentagon to reroute its Con-

gress-appropriated funds.

"The Biden Administration is committed to properly equipping American military personnel and caring for their families," the OMB statement read. "No more money will be diverted for the purposes of building a border wall, and [the Defense Department] has started canceling all border barrier projects using the diverted funds."

The \$3.6 billion — a portion of the \$10 billion that the Pentagon ultimately contributed to border wall coffers — was meant to build about 175 miles of fencing in Texas, Arizona and California, Pentagon officials said at the time. Then-Defense Secretary Mark Esper and other top defense officials said they were confident Congress would reinvest new money into the construction projects that lost funding in the

shift. However, Congress never re-appropriated funding to those projects, which spanned 23 states, 3 U.S. territories and bases in 20 other countries and included a host of projects from upgraded training ranges and facilities to new barracks and schools.

When Biden canceled nearly all border wall construction in an order issued on his first day in office, the Pentagon had disbursed about \$5.3 billion of the \$10 billion it had authorized for border wall construction, according to a report last month by the Congressional Research Service. The Pentagon in April announced it would no longer provide funding for border wall operations.

The \$2.2 billion returning to military construction will pay for 66 of the projects deferred under the Trump administration.

Navy veteran nominated as SECNAV

By CAITLIN DOORNBOS
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden will nominate Carlos Del Toro, a Navy veteran and a CEO for an engineering and consulting firm, to serve as Navy secretary, Sen. Jack Reed, D-R.I., the chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, said in a statement Friday.

Del Toro now serves as president and CEO of government contractor SBG Technology Solutions, which he founded in 2004, according to the company's website. The business, which is based in Alexandria, Va., specializes

in engineering, cyber security and information technology modernization and governance.

The nomination comes as the Navy works to modernize its force, devoting as much money — about \$22.6 billion — on research and development efforts as the service has to ship procurement in its proposed 2022 budget.

The pick for the service's top civilian leader is a Naval Academy graduate who spent 22 years on active duty in the Navy, according to his biography on the academy's alumni association website. Del Toro also spent five years as a civilian employee for the Navy, including

as senior military assistant to the director for programs analysis and evaluation.

During Del Toro's time in uniform, he served as a tactical action officer in Operation Desert Storm and was the first commander of the USS Bulkeley, an Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer, according to his biography.

"He has an impressive resume and exemplifies so many of the qualities that make the Navy and our nation great," Reed said. "Carlos rose through the ranks of the Navy with a distinguished record of service, leadership and innovation."

DOD intel working to fight foreign influence

By SARAH CAMMARATA
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Defense Department's intelligence agencies are overhauling efforts to combat foreign influence and disinformation campaigns in response to a request from combatant commanders for help in fighting information attacks from Russia and China, a Pentagon official told House lawmakers Friday.

"We need to revamp the training that we have today to ensure that people are properly focused on this issue," said Ronald Moultrie, the Defense Department's undersecretary for intelligence and security.

Moultrie also said the department is prioritizing getting information out to combatant commanders by using open source intelli-

gence and declassifying information that can be unsealed.

"But, we're also trying to protect those sensitive sources and methods. So, malign influence and activity in the gray zone ... we're really focused on it and within the enterprise — the Defense Intelligence Enterprise — we're revamping ourselves to be able to get after this problem," Moultrie said during a hearing of the House Armed Services Committee subpanel on intelligence strategies.

The Defense Intelligence Enterprise are organizations and infrastructure related to intelligence, counterintelligence and security at the Pentagon, the Joint Staff, the combatant commands and other parts of the Defense Department that deal with national intelligence and security.

In April, POLITICO uncovered a memo sent from nine of the 11 combatant commanders, pleading for spy agencies to find ways to declassify and release more information about bad behavior from Russia and China.

"We request this help to better enable the U.S., and by extension its allies and partners, to win without fighting, to fight now in so-called gray zones, and to supply ammunition in the ongoing war of narratives," the commanders wrote in January to then-acting Director of National Intelligence Joseph Maguire, according to POLITICO.

Russia and China have been using "gray zone" tactics, or nonmilitary actions, such as election meddling to compete against the United States.

US awards \$150M security aid package to Ukraine

By CAITLIN DOORNBOS
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Defense Department on Friday announced a new \$150 million security aid package for Ukraine to support the country's border security and territorial integrity to help thwart Russian expansionism.

The Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative package includes counter-artillery radars, counter-unmanned aerial systems, secure communications gear, electronic warfare capabilities, military medical evacuation equip-

ment and training and equipment "to improve the operational safety and capacity of Ukrainian Air Force bases," the Pentagon said in a statement. It complements a \$125 million package announced in March that included two Mark IV patrol boats, tactical gear, radars and other equipment to improve command and control capabilities, medical treatment and combat evacuation.

The \$150 million package was awarded after the Pentagon and State Department certified Ukraine had made "sufficient progress on defense reforms this year, as required by

the 2020 National Defense Authorization Act," which sets spending priorities for the Defense Department, according to the statement.

"The department continues to encourage Ukraine to enact reforms that are in line with NATO principles and standards to advance its Euro-Atlantic aspirations," chief Pentagon spokesman John Kirby told reporters on Friday.

Since 2014, the U.S. has given Ukraine more than \$2.5 billion in security assistance, according to the statement.

Trump seizures of Dems' data probed

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Justice Department's internal watchdog launched an investigation Friday after revelations that former President Donald Trump's administration secretly seized phone data from at least two House Democrats as part of an aggressive leaks probe. Democrats called the seizures "harrowing" and an abuse of power.

The announcement by Inspector General Michael Horowitz came shortly after Deputy Attorney General Lisa Monaco made the request for an internal investigation. Horowitz said he would examine whether the data subpoenaed by the Justice Department and turned over by Apple followed department policy and "whether any such uses, or the investigations, were based upon improper considerations."

Horowitz said he would also investigate similar Trump-era seizures of journalists'

phone records.

House Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff, D-Calif., and another Democratic member of the panel, California Rep. Eric Swalwell, said Apple notified them last month that their metadata had been subpoenaed and turned over to the Justice Department in 2018, as their committee was investigating the former president's ties to Russia. Schiff was then the top Democrat on the panel, which was led by Republicans.

While the Justice Department routinely investigates leaked information, including classified intelligence, subpoenaing the private information of members of Congress is extraordinarily rare. The disclosures, first reported by The New York Times, raise questions about what the Justice Department's justification was for spying on another branch of government and whether it was done for political reasons.

In a statement, White House deputy press secretary Andrew Bates said the Trump administration's conduct is "shocking" and "clearly fits within an appalling trend that represents the opposite of how authority should be used."

Bates said one of President Joe Biden's top reasons for seeking the presidency was "his predecessor's unjustifiable abuses of power, including the repugnant ways he tried to force his political interests upon the Department of Justice."

The Trump administration's secretive move to gain access to the data came as the president was fuming publicly and privately over investigations — in Congress and by then-special counsel Robert Mueller — into his campaign's ties to Russia. Trump called the probes a "witch hunt," regularly criticized Democrats and Mueller on Twitter and dismissed as "fake news" leaks he found harmful to his agenda.

Justice Department to review GOP voting laws

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Justice Department will scrutinize a wave of new laws in Republican-controlled states that tighten voting rules, Attorney General Merrick Garland said Friday, vowing to take action on any violations of federal law.

He announced plans to double staffing within the department's civil rights division and said the department would send guidance to states about election-related activity, including mail voting and post-election audits. He also pledged to investigate and prosecute those who would threaten election workers, noting a rise in such cases.

"There are many things open to debate in America, but the right of all eligible citizens to vote is not one of them," Garland said in his first direct response to the restrictive voting laws being passed in more than a dozen states where Republi-

cans control the legislature and governor's office.

Speaking to staff of the agency's civil rights division, he said the resources of the Justice Department must be rededicated to "meet the challenge of the current moment."

His message was clear: The department doesn't plan to stay on the sidelines of the voting battles that have erupted in statehouses across the country. Along with reviewing new state laws, Garland said the department also will examine existing ones for their potential to discriminate against minority voters.

He also reiterated the administration's support for two proposals pushed by congressional Democrats that would create minimum federal standards for voting and would restore the ability of his agency to review changes to state election laws in places with a history of racial discrimination.

US vaccine surplus grows as expiration dates loom

Associated Press

In Tennessee and North Carolina, demand for the COVID-19 vaccine has slowed down so much that they have given millions of doses back to the federal government, even though less than half of their total populations are vaccinated.

Oklahoma has not asked for new doses from the government for more than a month, spurning its 200,000-a-week allotment. Around the country, states are rushing to use up doses before they expire this summer.

The U.S. is confronted with an ever-growing surplus of coronavirus vaccine, looming expiration dates and stubbornly lagging demand at a time when the developing world is clamoring for doses to stem a rise in infections.

Million-dollar prizes, free beer and marijuana, raffled-off hunting rifles and countless other giveaways around the country have failed to significantly move the needle on vaccine hes-

itancy, raising the specter of new outbreaks.

The stockpiles are becoming more daunting each week. Oklahoma has more than 700,000 doses on shelves but is administering only 4,500 a day and has 27,000 Pfizer and Moderna doses that are set to expire at the end of the month.

Millions of Johnson & Johnson doses nationwide were set to expire this month before the government extended their dates by six weeks, but some leaders acknowledge it will be difficult to use them up even by then.

"We really cannot let doses expire. That would be a real outrage, given the need to get vaccines to some under-vaccinated communities in the U.S. and the glaring gap in vaccinations and the inequity of vaccinations that we have globally," said Dr. Kirsten Bibbins-Domingo, chair of epidemiology and biostatistics at the University of California, San Francisco.

FBI takes on misconduct in its ranks

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Faced with a #MeToo reckoning, the FBI says it is getting serious about sexual harassment in its ranks, starting a 24/7 tip line, doing more to help accusers and taking a tougher stand against agents found to have committed misconduct.

The changes follow Associated Press reporting last year that found a series of sexual assault and harassment allegations against senior officials who were allowed to quietly avoid discipline and retire or transfer even after the claims were substantiated.

FBI Deputy Director Paul Abbate told the AP that the bureau is sending its strongest

message ever that employees who are tempted to engage in sexual misconduct should be scared because if they do so, “we’re coming for them.”

“That’s a strong approach, a forceful shift and we mean it. And it’s coming from the top,” Abbate said. “Individuals who engage in this type of misconduct don’t belong in the FBI and they certainly should not have supervisory oversight of others. Period.”

Among the changes FBI officials detailed to AP in a series of recent interviews was a round-the-clock tip line that provides a centralized mechanism to report abuse, though they would not say how many calls it has received. They also cited a working group of senior executives to review policies and

procedures on harassment and victim support, and faster action to investigate allegations and fire or at least demote employees found to have engaged in misconduct to ensure they have no path to management.

To address chronic concerns that the FBI makes it difficult and intimidating for victims to come forward, the bureau is more broadly spreading the word in online and internal communications about where victimized employees can report allegations. And the FBI’s Victim Services Division, which until recently had focused on aiding victims of federal crimes outside the bureau, has been extending the same level of support to employees who are victims of internal misconduct.

Ex-Mossad chief signals Israel attacked Iran

Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — The outgoing chief of Israel’s Mossad intelligence service has offered the closest acknowledgment yet his country was behind recent attacks targeting Iran’s nuclear program and a military scientist.

The comments by Yossi Cohen, speaking to Israel’s Channel 12 investigative program “Uvda” in a segment aired Thursday night, offered an extraordinary debriefing by the head of the typically secretive agency in what appears to be the final days of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s rule.

It also gave a clear warning to other scientists in Iran’s nuclear program that they

too could become targets for assassination even as diplomats in Vienna try to negotiate terms to try to salvage its atomic accord with world powers.

Among the major attacks to target Iran, none have struck deeper than two explosions over the last year at its Natanz nuclear facility. There, centrifuges enrich uranium from an underground hall designed to protect them from airstrikes.

Discussing Natanz, the interviewer asked Cohen where he’d take them if they could travel there. Cohen said “to the cellar” where “the centrifuges used to spin.” “It doesn’t look like it used to look,” he added.

Cohen did not directly claim the attacks, but his specificity offered the closest ac-

knowledgment yet of an Israeli hand in the attacks. The interviewer, journalist Ilana Dayan, also seemingly offered a detailed description in a voiceover of how Israel snuck the explosives into Natanz’s underground halls.

They also discussed the November killing of Mohsen Fakhrazadeh, an Iranian scientist who began Tehran’s military nuclear program decades ago.

While Cohen on camera doesn’t claim the killing, Dayan in the segment described Cohen as having “personally signed off on the entire campaign.” Dayan also described how a remotely operated machine gun fixed to a pickup truck killed Fakhrazadeh and later self-destructed.

Pulitzers honor coverage of pandemic, racial protests

Associated Press

The Associated Press won two Pulitzer Prizes in photography Friday for its coverage of the racial injustice protests and the coronavirus’s terrible toll on the elderly, while The New York Times received the public service award for its detailed, data-filled reporting on the pandemic.

In a year dominated by COVID-19 and furious debate over race and policing, the Star Tribune of Minneapolis won the breaking news reporting prize for

its coverage of George Floyd’s murder and its aftermath, while Darnella Frazier — the teenager who recorded the killing on a cellphone — received a special citation.

Frazier’s award was intended to highlight “the crucial role of citizens in journalists’ quest for truth and justice,” the Pulitzer Board said.

The AP and The New York Times each won two Pulitzers, the most prestigious prize in journalism, first awarded in 1917.

The feature photography prize went to AP’s chief photographer in Spain, Emilio Morenatti, who captured haunting images of an older couple embracing through a plastic sheet, mortuary workers in hazmat gear removing bodies, and people enduring the crisis in isolation.

The breaking news photography prize was shared by 10 AP photographers for their coverage of the protests set off by Floyd’s killing. One widely published photograph by Julio Cortez on the

night of May 28 in riot-torn Minneapolis showed a lone, silhouetted protester running with an upside-down American flag past a burning liquor store.

The New York Times received its public service prize for pandemic coverage that the judges said was “courageous, prescient and sweeping” and “filled a data vacuum” that helped better prepare the public. Wesley Morris of the Times won for criticism, for his writing on the intersection of race and culture.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Dog ejected after crash found herding sheep

WA SPOKANE — A pet dog who vanished for two days after being ejected from a vehicle during a car accident was found apparently doing the job it was bred to do — herding sheep.

Linda Oswald's family and their dog, Tilly, were driving along Idaho State Highway 41 when they crashed into another car, launching the dog through the rear window, The Spokesman-Review reported.

The unharmed but stunned dog then ran away, Oswald said.

Oswald said the family wrote a Facebook post that included a picture of the 2-year-old border collie and red heeler mix. Tyler, Travis and Zane Potter recognized the dog in the photo as the same dog they saw on their family farm south of Rathdrum.

Motorists report hacked traffic sign; sign removed

CO DENVER — Denver authorities said a portable traffic sign was hacked to flash the phrases, "Burn It Down," "Abolish Cops" and "Support Trans Kids."

The city's Department of Transportation and Infrastructure told KDVR-TV that the sign was removed after motorists spotted the phrases.

It wasn't immediately known how the sign was hacked.

Man stuck for days inside giant fan at vineyard

CA SANTA ROSA — Authorities rescued a man who said he had been trapped for two days inside a

large fan at a Northern California vineyard.

The man was discovered by a deputy responding to a call about a suspicious vehicle parked near the winery in Santa Rosa, the Sonoma County Sheriff's Office said in a statement. The deputy saw a hat on a piece of farming equipment and then found the man stuck inside the shaft of a vineyard fan.

"The man indicated he liked to take pictures of the engines of old farm equipment," the statement said. "After a thorough investigation, which revealed the farm equipment wasn't antique and the man had far more methamphetamine than camera equipment, the motivation to climb into the fan shaft remains a total mystery."

Bear found stuck after climbing power pole

AZ WILLCOX — A bear in Arizona emerged unscathed from quite the power trip when it became stuck on a utility pole.

Sulphur Springs Valley Electric Cooperative, a utility company based in the southern Arizona city of Willcox, was notified that a bear was tangled in power pole wires on the outskirts of town.

Werner Neubauer, a company lineman, said they immediately disabled the power so the animal would not get electrocuted.

The bear eventually climbed down and ran off into the desert.

Woman accidentally shoots sister in car

FL MIAMI BEACH — A Georgia woman visit-

ing South Florida accidentally shot her teenage sister in the face while handing her a gun inside a car, police said.

The shooting occurred on a Miami Beach road, the Miami Herald reported. Taniyria Holt, 24, of Atlanta, was arrested and charged with culpable negligence that inflicts personal injury and improper exhibition of firearms.

The victim, identified by an arrest report as Dre'Naya Ponder, 18, was on life support.

According to the arrest report, Holt told detectives she, her sister and two other women were recording video of themselves with cellphones while Holt handled a 9mm handgun owned by one of the other women. Believing the gun was not loaded, she said she handed it to her sister, but the gun fired and hit Ponder.

Coach charged after player took gun out of car

SC LANCASTER — A South Carolina youth basketball coach was arrested after a 10-year-old player took a loaded gun from his car to his elementary school, investigators said.

Isaac Lamon Adams, 36, was barred from legally owning a gun because of a previous criminal conviction, Lancaster County Sheriff Barry Faile said.

Adams sent the boy to his car to get something and the boy stole the unsecured weapon, Faile said.

Adams noticed his gun was missing the next day and called the boy's mother, investigators said. She went to Erwin Elementary School where the principal took the boy to the office

and found the loaded Glock model 42 .380 semiautomatic pistol in the child's waistband, the sheriff said.

Mom posed as student to push for better security

TX EL PASO — A Texas mom arrested for posing as her daughter at a middle school said she did it to push for better security on campus.

Casey Garcia, 30, was arrested on one count each of criminal trespass and tampering with government records, El Paso County Sheriff's Office officials said.

Deputies were notified by San Elizario Independent School District officials of Garcia trespassing on school grounds and posing as a student, the sheriff's department said.

Hit-and-run driver faked carjacking report

NJ LYNDHURST — A driver who struck and seriously injured a pedestrian later reported his car had been stolen during a carjacking in an attempt to cover up his involvement, authorities said.

Samuel Torres, 38, of Nutley, faces several charges stemming from the accident in Lyndhurst.

The injured 56-year-old woman remains hospitalized in critical but stable condition.

Shortly after the woman was found, Torres called police and said he had been assaulted and knocked unconscious during a carjacking. He said his car was missing, but authorities said Torres was driving the vehicle when the accident occurred and the carjacking report was fabricated.

— From wire reports



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Final four NHL teams unfamiliar foes

Associated Press

If the teams left in the NHL playoffs are sick and tired of facing the same opponents over and over, they are in luck in the semifinals.

After exclusively divisional play this season and through the first two rounds, the hockey playoffs are down to a final four of teams that haven't played each other all year. The New York Islanders face the Tampa Bay Lightning in one semifinal that's a rematch of the 2020 Eastern Conference finals, while the Vegas Golden Knights play the Montreal Canadiens in a playoff series for the first time.

After so much familiarity from seeing the same teams over and over, the final two rounds with the Stanley Cup on the line bring every element of the unknown.

"It's such a different series in terms of the preparation," Vegas general manager Kelly McCrimmon said. "Now with the Islanders and Tampa Bay, our own series with Montreal, it's brand new. Starting from

scratch."

The league that has emphasized rivalries for decades limited play within four remade divisions for one season only because of the pandemic. It allowed all 31 teams to complete a condensed, 56-game schedule with 16 making the playoffs.

New York emerged from the East, Tampa Bay the Central, Vegas the West and Montreal the North. Players and coaches from these teams haven't thought much about each other all season, let alone scout or prepare for them.

"Different season for everyone," Canadiens coach Dominique Ducharme said. "Different style of play or different teams that you play often, but that's part of the challenge for everyone right now."

If Montreal-Vegas, which begins Monday night, goes the distance, the teams will face off more times during one playoff series than they have all-time in the regular season, because the Golden Knights began playing in 2017.

The Lightning and Islanders grinded out a six-game series nine months ago in the post-season bubble in Edmonton, Alberta, so there will be some familiarity when the puck drops Sunday afternoon in Tampa.

"It helps a little bit," Islanders coach Barry Trotz said. "Most of our players played in that series, so they understand when we're talking about certain trends or the way they play."

Tampa Bay won that series last fall before beating Dallas and hoisting the Stanley Cup. With the Lightning, Islanders and Golden Knights in the semifinals again, the NHL has three of the same teams in the final four for the first time since 1991 and 1992.

Vegas center Mattias Janmark and Montreal winger Corey Perry are back in the third round after going on a run to the final with Dallas.

Perry said watching games in other divisions helps get past the uncertainty.

"I think you look at our two teams and there's four lines on

both sides, six D, and two great world-class goalies are going to go battle head-to-head," Perry said. "It's going to be fun."

The Lightning are having fun with 2019 MVP Nikita Kucherov back after missing the regular season recovering from hip surgery. Kucherov leads all scorers with 18 points through two rounds of the playoffs.

"He's a tremendous hockey player," Islanders GM Lou Lamoriello said.

The Islanders remember how tremendous Kucherov can be, and Tampa Bay now has captain Steven Stamkos playing, too. But each team also knows there are some differences masked by not being on the ice together since September.

"Maybe you wish you had played them a little more recently, but at the end of the day, this is the situation we've been dealt," Lightning defenseman Ryan McDonagh said. "We knew if we got to this point we were going to have to face a team that we hadn't played in the regular season."

Krejcikova wins first Grand Slam title at French Open

Associated Press

PARIS — Thinking of her late coach the whole time, Barbora Krejcikova went from unseeded to Grand Slam champion at the French Open.

Krejcikova beat 31st-seeded Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova 6-1, 2-6, 6-4 in the final at Roland Garros on Saturday to win the title in just her fifth major tournament as a singles player.

When it ended with Pavlyuchenkova's backhand landing long on the fourth match point for Krejcikova, a 25-year-old from the Czech Republic, they met at the net for a hug.

Then Krejcikova blew kisses, her eyes squeezed shut, in tribute to her former coach, Jana Novotna, the 1998 Wimbledon champion who died of cancer in 2017.

"Pretty much her last words were just enjoy and just try to win a Grand Slam. And, I mean, I know that, from somewhere, she's looking after me," Krejcikova told the crowd

at Court Philippe Chatrier, limited to 5,000 because of the coronavirus pandemic.

"All of this that just happened, these two weeks, is pretty much because she is just looking after me from up there," Krejcikova said, lifting her left hand toward the sky. "It was amazing that I had a chance to meet her and that she was such an inspiration for me. I just really miss her. But I hope she's happy right now. I'm extremely happy."

Krejcikova is the third unseeded women's champion since 2017 at Roland Garros. There were zero from 1968 through 2016.

She now will try to become the first woman since Mary Pierce in 2000 to win the French Open singles and doubles titles in the same year. Krejcikova and partner Katerina Siniakova already own two Grand Slam doubles titles and reached Sunday's final of that event.

Pavlyuchenkova, a 29-year-old Russian, was playing in her first Grand Slam final in

the 52nd major tournament of her career — the most appearances by a woman before reaching a title match.

"Since (I was) a little girl, I was thinking if one day I will be standing here, I was preparing a speech all the time when I was little. What I could have said. What I would say. Right now, I have no words, actually. I forgot everything that I was preparing," said Pavlyuchenkova, who was treated for a left leg problem late in the second set.

"In the last point, I think I was dead," she said. "I don't have any more fuel."

This was only the second WTA singles title for Krejcikova — and they've come in her past two tournaments.

She is the sixth consecutive first-time Grand Slam champion to collect the women's championship at Roland Garros, where the red clay can frustrate players by diminishing the effectiveness of speedy serves and by creating odd bounces.

Embiid, 76ers take 2-1 lead over Hawks

Associated Press

ATLANTA — Joel Embiid kept taking falls. He also kept rising to his feet.

Nothing was going to take Philadelphia's big center off the court with the playoff series lead on the line.

Embiid scored 27 points and the 76ers rode a dominant third quarter to a 127-111 victory over the Atlanta Hawks on Friday night and a 2-1 lead in the Eastern Conference semifinal series.

Embiid, playing with a cartilage tear in his right knee, added nine rebounds, eight assists and three blocked shots. He played 34 minutes despite turning his ankle on one fall and landing hard on his back on another.

"I'm OK," Embiid said. "I'm standing up. I'm walking. I finished the game. So I'm gonna keep getting back up. I'm going to keep fighting. That's been me since I've been playing basketball. ... Whatever happens, get back up and keep it going."

Tobias Harris had 22 points and Ben Simmons added 18 to

help the 76ers end Atlanta's streak of 13 home wins. The 76ers have taken the series lead with back-to-back wins.

Simmons has had primary defensive responsibility against Trae Young, who led Atlanta with 28 points, in each of the 76ers' two wins in the series. On Friday night, he was challenged to take a bigger offensive role, especially with Embiid facing constant double-teams.

"I was just trying to push the pace and get in the lane, stay aggressive and get to the rim, get into a rhythm," Simmons said. "I think I did a good job of that in the second half."

The 76ers played up to their No. 1 seed, taking a lead of 22 points and keeping the advantage in double figures most of the second half. The Hawks played from behind after their last lead at 11-10.

Trae Young led Atlanta with 28 points. John Collins had 23 and Bogdan Bogdanovic 19.

Game 4 is Monday night in Atlanta.

The Hawks have difficulty

matching up with Embiid (7-0, 280) but also have size disadvantages at other spots, including with the 6-foot-9 Simmons guarding the 6-foot-1 Young.

"It's not anything we can't adjust to," Young said.

But when asked what the Hawks can do, Young added "Obviously, if I had the answers, we wouldn't be talking about it right now."

The 76ers outscored the Hawks 66-58 in the paint and 15-6 on fast breaks.

"I think their size has had an impact on this series," Hawks coach Nate McMillan said. "They just pretty much pounded us in the paint tonight."

After leading 65-60 early in the third period, Philadelphia took command with an 11-0 run. The 76ers outscored the Hawks 34-19 in the third period.

Simmons had two baskets during the run, including a jam for a 76-60 lead.

Atlanta couldn't regain the momentum as the 76ers stretched the lead to 20 points, 93-73, late in the period.

Embiid, who faced constant

double-teams from Atlanta's defense, made 12 of 16 free throws.

Embiid had a scare in the third quarter when he limped and appeared to be in pain after grabbing a rebound. Embiid appeared to step awkwardly on Clint Capela's foot, turning his ankle.

"He's playing hard," said 76ers coach Doc Rivers. "He's giving us everything. ... He is going through a lot, I'll tell you that."

Korkmaz emerges

After Shake Milton energized the 76ers by scoring 14 points off the bench in Game 2, Philadelphia found bench production from a different source.

Furkan Korkmaz, who scored a combined seven points in the first two games of the series, scored 11 points in the opening period while making two threes. He added another three in the fourth for 14 points.

"It was huge," Embiid said. "We got that early lead because of him."

Suns spoil Jokic's MVP party by beating Nuggets

Associated Press

DENVER — Deandre Ayton scrutinized the box score and couldn't believe his eyes as he read Nikola Jokic's stat line: 32 points, 20 rebounds, 10 assists.

"That's insane. That's the MVP," Ayton said after the Phoenix Suns overcame the Joker's historic triple-double to thump Denver 116-102 Friday, putting the Nuggets on the brink of elimination.

Following a raucous pregame ceremony celebrating his MVP award, Jokic joined Wilt Chamberlain and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar as the only players with 30 points, 20 boards and 10 assists in an NBA playoff game. Jokic, though, was apologetic afterward, telling his teammates this loss was on him because of his 13-for-29 shooting performance.

Nonsense, said Denver guard Monte Morris, who called Jokic's performance phenomenal.

"He's carrying us," Morris said. "We've got to help him."

Morris scored 21 off the bench but Denver's four other starters scored just 30 points, half by Michael Porter Jr., who was 5-for-13 from the floor.

Devin Booker scored 28 points and teamed with Chris Paul to lead a steady offensive onslaught that countered Jokic's big night.

"We knew this was going to be an emotional game for them with Joker being presented with the trophy before the game," Paul said. "We just talked about withstanding their runs."

Jokic seemed to consider his big game more horrific than historic.

"I'm frustrated with myself because I missed shots," said Jokic, who also missed four of nine free throws. "I didn't play on top of my game, especially shooting-wise. It would be much easier for us if I started making shots.

Of course, they're making it tough for me to make shots."

With their sixth straight victory, the second-seeded Suns took a 3-0 lead in the best-of-seven series. Game 4 is Sunday at Ball Arena.

Paul had 27 points, eight assists and three steals for the Suns, who pulled away after halftime for the third straight time. All five of Phoenix's starters scored in double figures.

They are a one win away from their first trip to the Western Conference Finals since 2009-10 — which was the last time Phoenix made the playoffs.

The third-seeded Nuggets, who reached the conference finals last year, are on the brink of getting swept in a playoff series for the first time since the Lakers bounced them out of the first round in 2007-08.

Jokic dedicated his MVP award to his teammates during a loud pregame ceremony.

Vanderbilt, Stanford dominate

Associated Press

Vanderbilt's Kumar Rocker and Stanford's Brendan Beck turned in dominant pitching performances in NCAA super regionals Friday to put their teams on the cusp of berths in the College World Series.

Rocker led the reigning national champion Commodores to a 2-0 victory over East Carolina in Nashville, and Beck held down one of the nation's top offensive teams in a 15-3 win over Texas Tech in Lubbock, Texas.

No. 1 national seed Arkansas made fast work of North Carolina State in the opener of its best-of-three series, getting a grand slam from Cullen Smith and two homers from Robert Moore in a 21-2 win in Fayetteville, Ark. It was the largest margin of victory in super regionals since the tournament went to its current format in 1999.

Tony Bullard continued his three-week offensive surge, homering twice and tripling to lead Arizona past Mississippi 9-3 in Tucson, Ariz.

Rocker, who could be the first player taken in the Major League Baseball draft next month, allowed three hits and struck out 11 in 7½ innings in what was probably his final appearance at Hawkins Field. In the regional opener against Presbyterian last week, he threw seven innings of two-hit shutout ball for No. 4 national seed Vandy (44-15).

Stanford's Beck (9-1) went to the mound in the bottom of the first inning with a four-run lead. He had 0-2 counts on 18 of the 30 batters he faced and struck out a career-high 13 in 7½ innings. He gave up two runs and was never stressed after the No. 9 Cardinal (37-15) scored four times in the first on a homer by Tim Tawa and three straight RBI singles.

The Razorbacks' 21 runs were their most in 162 all-time NCAA Tournament games and the most allowed by the Wolfpack in 123.

Cubs top Cards on 'Opening Day 2.0'

Associated Press

CHICAGO — Anthony Rizzo could feel the fans hanging onto each pitch as he fouled off one after another.

When he finally launched one over the right-field wall on the 14th pitch of his at-bat, Wrigley Field rocked in a way it hadn't in years, with a near-capacity crowd on its feet and roaring.

"It was incredible," Rizzo said.

Joc Pederson homered and drove in three runs, Rizzo and Willson Contreras went deep and the Chicago Cubs beat the St. Louis Cardinals 8-5 on Friday.

Wrigley Field allowed 100% capacity for the first time since 2019 on what the Cubs called "Opening Day 2.0." They fell behind 5-1, then treated a crowd of 35,112 to a comeback win over their NL Central rivals.

Mets 3, Padres 2: Jacob deGrom was pulled from a do-it-all gem with right flexor tendinitis, a troubling diagnosis for host New York that clouded a victory over San Diego.

DeGrom (6-2) faced the minimum over six innings and ripped a two-run single, giving him five RBIs this season — compared to four earned runs allowed. He struck out 10 in the abbreviated outing.

San Diego dropped its third straight. Blake Snell (2-3) allowed three runs in four-plus innings, and the Padres couldn't do enough damage against New York's bullpen.

Giants 1, Nationals 0: Washington ace Max Scherzer left after just 12 pitches because of groin inflammation, Buster Posey homered and visiting San Francisco won on Anthony DeSclafani's career-best two-hitter.

A crowd of 18,029 attended the first game at Nationals Park without capacity limits since the 2019 World Series.

DeSclafani (6-2) struck out eight and walked on his his third career shutout and complete game.

Angels 6, Diamondbacks 5 (10): Shohei Ohtani struck out

eight, hit two doubles and pushed through an injury scare to lead visiting Los Angeles past slumping Arizona.

Max Stassi's RBI groundout scored Jared Walsh in the top of the 10th to put the Angels ahead for good. Extra innings were needed after Arizona's Eduardo Escobar hit a two-out, tying homer off Raisel Iglesias (4-2) in the ninth.

Arizona lost its eighth in a row and has lost 31 of its last 36. The team's 20-44 record is the worst in the big leagues.

Dodgers 12, Rangers 1: Clayton Kershaw bounced back from two bad outings with six sharp innings, Gavin Lux drove in four runs and hit one of his team's five homers as host Los Angeles routed Texas.

Max Muncy, Justin Turner and Lux homered in the first inning. Albert Pujols and Will Smith also went deep as Los Angeles won its fourth in a row and sent Texas to its 16th straight road loss.

Kershaw (8-5) gave up only one unearned and three hits. He struck out nine and walked none.

Athletics 4, Royals 3: Elvis Andrus hit a winning single in the ninth inning after making pair of fielding gaffes, and host Oakland beat Kansas City.

Seth Brown homered to snap a long funk for the A's. Matt Chapman had three hits including an RBI double.

Kansas City has lost six of seven.

Indians 7, Mariners 0: Aaron Civale gave up a single to start the game before dominating Seattle's light-hitting lineup for eight innings, leading host Cleveland to the win in front of the largest crowd at Progressive Field since 2019.

Civale (9-2) allowed J.P. Crawford's leadoff hit and nothing else to become the first AL pitcher with nine wins. He struck out a career-high 11 and retired 22 in a row after loading the bases in the first.

Rays 4, Orioles 2: At St. Pe-

tersburg, Fla., Ryan Yarbrough pitched six solid innings and Tampa Bay became the first team to reach 40 wins this season.

Brandon Lowe homered for the Rays, who are 21-5 since May 13.

Marlins 4, Braves 3: Jazz Chisholm's two-out, two-run single in the fourth inning put his team ahead to stay, and Miami beat visiting Atlanta for the fourth time in five meetings this year.

Reds 11, Rockies 5: Joey Votto's three-run blast highlighted a five-homer effort as host Cincinnati extended Colorado's road woes.

The Rockies fell to 5-25 away from Coors Field and have lost every road series this season.

Red Sox 6, Blue Jays 5: Alex Verdugo hit a line drive off the Green Monster to drive in the game-winning run in the ninth inning and Boston rallied from a four-run deficit to beat visiting Toronto.

Vladimir Guerrero Jr. had three of Toronto's 16 hits, including his major league-leading 19th homer of the season.

Astros 6, Twins 4: Martín Maldonado hit a go-ahead double in the ninth and Houston beat host Minnesota.

Jose Altuve and Yuli Gurriel homered and Alex Bregman drove in two runs for Houston, which won for the fourth time in five games.

Brewers 7, Pirates 4: Christian Yelich hit a bases-loaded double that broke a tie and Pittsburgh relievers issued three consecutive bases-loaded walks in a five-run seventh inning that helped fuel host Milwaukee's win.

White Sox 5, Tigers 4 (10): Liam Hendricks angrily threw a wet ball into foul territory after his first pitch of the ninth inning, leading to a lengthy rain delay, then gave up a tying two-run homer to Daz Cameron before Chicago beat host Detroit in 10 innings.