

NASA, DOD eye SpaceX alternatives amid feud

The Washington Post

NASA and Pentagon officials moved swiftly this past week to urge competitors to Elon Musk's SpaceX to more quickly develop alternative rockets and spacecraft after President Donald Trump threatened to cancel Space X's contracts and Musk's defiant response.

Government officials were especially stunned after Musk responded to Trump with a salvo of his own: SpaceX would stop flying its Dragon spacecraft, a move that would leave the space agency with no way to transport its astronauts to the International Space Station.

Musk later recanted his threat. But it alarmed officials at NASA, which entrusts SpaceX with the lives of its as-

tronauts, and at the Pentagon, which relies heavily on the company to launch its most sensitive satellites.

The worried reaction within space and national security agencies highlights the risks of the government's heavy dependence on SpaceX for crucial tasks, including classified missions. SpaceX, with billions of dollars in government contracts, flies people and cargo to the ISS, launches satellites for the Pentagon and develops satellites used by intelligence agencies. The concerns are compounded by the fact that its competitors have been slow to catch up, leaving SpaceX's dominance largely unchallenged and the government with few options.

This account is based on interviews with a dozen people in industry and government who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly about internal deliberations.

One NASA official said that watching the feud between Trump and Musk play out on social media at first was "entertaining." But once Musk called for decommissioning Dragon, "it turned really terrifying."

There was a similar reaction in the Pentagon, where a person said staff officers "looked at each other and said, 'oh, it's not funny anymore.' There was a realization that we're not watching TV. This is a real issue."

Musk's behavior has worried NASA officials before. In 2018,

NASA ordered an investigation into SpaceX's safety culture after Musk appeared to take a small hit of marijuana on the Joe Rogan podcast. But his sudden threat on social media to cut off NASA's access to the orbiting space station, which has cost NASA some \$100 billion over its lifespan, "crossed a line," one former space agency official said. "When you realize that he's willing to shut everything down just on an impulse, that kind of behavior and the dependence on him is dangerous. ... I can tell you there is deep concern within NASA."

The rift between Musk and Trump was also fueled by the White House's withdrawal of Jared Isaacman's nomination to be NASA administrator.

Space Force officer pulled off post due to trans ban

BY JANQUA ROBINSON

Stars and Stripes

A U.S. Space Force officer has been placed on administrative leave, pending separation, under the Defense Department's new ban on transgender service members, ending her more than 22-year military career.

Col. Bree Fram, one of the highest-ranking openly transgender officers in the U.S. military, wrote in an Instagram post Friday that her removal would take effect the following day.

"In my last official act, I was able to pin medals on three of my folks," she wrote. "The last salute broke my heart in two and the tears flowed freely even as I have so much to be thankful for and so many amazing memories."

Fram, an astronautical engi-

neer, served at the Pentagon as division chief for requirements integration. Her work focused on "defining the future capabilities that we're going to need to win wars far into the future," she told Stars and Stripes by phone just days before her leave.

Fram's post comes as the Pentagon begins enforcing a directive that bars individuals with gender dysphoria — when a person's biological sex does not match their gender identity — from serving. The policy stems from Executive Order 14183, signed in January by President Donald Trump and cleared for enforcement after the Supreme Court granted a stay in the case *Shilling v. United States*. Under the new rules, active-duty troops had until Friday to voluntarily self-identify

as transgender; National Guard and Reserve members have until July 7.

Fram is among roughly 1,000 troops who have come forward. Those who did not self-identify may now be flagged by commanders or medical staff during annual health checks or routine reviews.

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth has framed the ban as a return to traditional standards. "No more pronouns. No more dudes in dresses. We're done with that s—," he said last month during a special operations forces conference in Tampa, Fla. On X, he added, "No More Trans @ DoD."

Fram said she came out in 2016 on the same day then-Defense Secretary Ash Carter lifted the military's previous ban on open transgender service.

"I left for the gym to burn off the nervous energy, uncertain of how life might change," she recalled on Instagram. "When I returned, one by one, my teammates came to my desk, shook my hand, and said versions of, 'It's an honor to serve with you.'"

Fram said she had a similar experience on Friday.

"There was a moment of silence before reality settled in," she wrote of her final meeting with Joint Staff leaders. "Then, one-by-one, a room full of senior leaders, admirals and generals, walked over to me ... they offered those same words, now tinged with the sadness of past tense: 'It's been an honor to serve with you.'"

Information from The Associated Press was used in this report.

Soldier gets 23 years for killing wife

By **WYATT OLSON**

Stars and Stripes

WHEELER ARMY AIRFIELD, Hawaii — The Hawaii-based soldier who killed his pregnant wife and disposed of her body in an incinerator last summer on Oahu was sentenced Thursday to 23 years in prison, the maximum possible under the terms of a deal in which he pleaded guilty to two counts of voluntary manslaughter.

During the sentencing at the Wheeler Army Airfield court-

house, Judge Rebecca Farrell said she imposed the maximum sentence on Pfc. Dewayne Johnson II, 29, due to "particularly aggravating facts" in the case.

He had also pleaded guilty to obstruction of justice and providing false official statements.

Johnson admitted in court Tuesday that he killed 19-year-old Mischa Johnson, who was six months pregnant, during a heated argument on July 12. He struck her head with a machete in the bedroom of the home they shared

on Schofield Barracks.

Over the next few days, he purchased a chainsaw, cut off her arms, legs and head, stashed them separately in garbage bags and tossed them into a dumpster used by his unit on the base.

That dumpster is emptied directly into the island's solid waste incinerator.

Her body has not been found.

Johnson concocted a complex scheme intended to fool his wife's family and friends into believing she was alive as he dismembered

her body and destroyed evidence.

On Aug. 1, he reported her missing, telling law enforcement that she was depressed and possibly suicidal. Army units at Schofield conducted numerous searches on and around the base — searches led at times by Johnson.

During closing statements Wednesday, Johnson's defense team argued that the minimum sentence of 18 years was sufficient to rehabilitate him and render him no longer a threat to society.

Ruiz caps Marine's rise to stardom via email mistake

By **LYDIA GORDON**

Stars and Stripes

Cpl. Andrew Hundley became an unexpected Marine Corps celebrity several weeks ago, after a staff sergeant's routine email about a simple certificate for Hundley accidentally was sent to most of the service's members.

The Hundley buzz was reignited Thursday when the service's top enlisted leader, Sgt. Maj. of the Marine Corps Carlos Ruiz, made a surprise appearance at Camp Johnson, N.C., for

Hundley's much-anticipated graduation from a monthlong leadership course.

A cyberspace warfare operator from the Camp Lejeune-based 8th Communications Battalion, Hundley was marking completion of the standard corporals course, a required leadership school for promotion eligibility.

"The Marine Corps gods have called upon me," Ruiz said as he entered the packed graduation room, a video posted to his official Instagram page Thursday

shows. "Where are you at, Hundley? Raise your hand."

Ruiz personally handed Hundley his certificate as he crossed the stage, capping off the viral journey with a moment of recognition, which was met with a chorus of cheers from the audience.

Ruiz's in-person congratulations were the showstopper in a saga that began April 16, when Hundley's staff noncommissioned officer attempted to email a prerequisite certificate he needed to attend profession-

al military education course.

Instead of reaching the intended recipient, the message was mistakenly sent to the entire 8th Communications Battalion distribution list, which inadvertently also contained many of the service's email addresses.

In classic Marine Corps fashion, the reply-all storm that followed quickly spiraled into chaos. Hundreds of Marines chimed in with jokes, congratulations or desperate pleas to be removed from the thread.

Navy deploys USS Sampson to southern border mission

By **COREY DICKSTEIN**

Stars and Stripes

The Navy last week deployed a guided-missile destroyer to join U.S. Northern Command's southern border operations meant to deter illegal crossing and drug trafficking, the service announced Wednesday.

The USS Sampson, an Arleigh Burke-class destroyer, left its homeport in San Diego on Tuesday to replace the USS Charleston, a littoral combat ship, in supporting the border operations that

President Donald Trump has made a top priority in his second administration.

The Sampson will operate with a Coast Guard law enforcement detachment on board that officials have said brings specialized expertise in maritime interdiction to help address a range of challenges, from countering illegal activities to supporting humanitarian efforts and homeland security operations. The Charleston operated with a similar team on board during its tour, which

lasted about two weeks.

The Navy has deployed ships — mostly destroyers — with the Coast Guard teams on board on both coasts near the U.S. southern border since March as part of Trump's build-up of military and law enforcement forces along the U.S.-Mexico boundary.

"Sampson brings robust multi-mission capabilities to the task of defending U.S. sovereignty and supporting homeland defense operations in coordination with U.S. NORTHCOM," the Navy said in a

news release.

The deployment comes as the Pentagon has added more troops to its border operations, where U.S. forces — mostly soldiers and Marines — have provided Customs and Border Protection officials with a range of support, including reconnaissance, construction, logistics and air-lift capabilities.

In all, there are now more than 10,000 military troops stationed along the border to assist Border Patrol.

National Guard sent to LA to quell protests

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — National Guard troops began arriving in Los Angeles early Sunday on orders from President Donald Trump in response to clashes in recent days between federal immigration authorities and protesters seeking to block them from carrying out deportations.

Members of California's National Guard were seen staging at the federal complex in downtown Los Angeles that includes the Metropolitan Detention Center, one of several sites that have drawn confrontations involving hundreds of people in the last two days.

Trump has said he is deploying 2,000 California National Guard troops to Los Angeles to quell the protests, which he called "a form of rebellion."

The move came over the objections of Gov. Gavin Newsom,

marking the first time in decades that a state's national guard was activated without a request from its governor, according to the Brennan Center for Justice.

Early Sunday, the deployment was limited to a small area in downtown Los Angeles, with the rest of the city of 4 million people largely unaffected.

Their arrival follows two days of relatively small protests that began Friday in downtown Los Angeles before spreading on Saturday to Paramount, a heavily Latino city south of the city, and neighboring Compton.

As federal agents staged near a Home Depot in Paramount, demonstrators sought to block Border Patrol vehicles, with some hurling rocks and chunks of cement.

In response, federal agents in riot gear unleashed tear gas,

flash-bang explosives and pepper balls.

Tensions were high after a series of sweeps by immigration authorities the previous day, as the weeklong tally of immigrant arrests in the city climbed past 100. A prominent union leader was arrested while protesting and accused of impeding law enforcement.

Newsom called Trump on Friday night and they spoke for about 40 minutes, according to the governor's office. It was not clear if they spoke Saturday or Sunday.

On Sunday morning, Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem said the National Guard would "keep peace and allow people to be able to protest but also to keep law and order."

The troops included members of the 79th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, according

to a social media post from the Department of Defense that showed dozens of National Guard members with long guns and an armored vehicle.

In a signal of the administration's aggressive approach, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth also threatened to deploy active-duty Marines "if violence continues" in the region.

Newsom, a Democrat, described Trump's decision to call in the National Guard as a "provocative show of force" that would only escalate tensions, adding that Hegseth's threat to deploy Marines on American soil was "deranged behavior."

Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders said the order by Trump reflected "a president moving this country rapidly into authoritarianism" and "usurping the powers of the United States Congress."

Rand: US must harden bases against drones

BY SETH ROBSON

Stars and Stripes

The U.S. Air Force needs to do more to protect its Indo-Pacific bases, including from evolving threats such as drones, according to a California-based think tank.

The Rand Corp. report — Assessing Progress on Air Base Defense — was released Tuesday and highlights the growing vulnerability of U.S. military installations to low-cost, remote-controlled and autonomous drones, a tactic that has gained prominence in the war in Ukraine.

"It is at the lower end of the capability spectrum that threats may be evolving the most quickly," the report warns. "Recent experiences in the Russia-Ukraine war are highlighting the threat of small remote control and auto-

nous drones to air bases, particularly to soft buildings and aircraft parked in the open."

The report follows a recent Ukrainian drone strike that reportedly damaged or destroyed a portion of Russia's long-range bomber fleet, raising alarms about the susceptibility of U.S. air assets to similar attacks.

"Russian air base defenders do not appear ready to protect their air bases against the small drones that are destroying their aircraft," Rand's report states without referencing the June 1 strike. "To avoid a similar fate on a much larger scale, the U.S. Air Force should conduct a serious cost benefit analysis of fielding its own active defense capabilities, ones that are tailored for air base defense in Pacific and European threat environments."

Kilmar Abrego Garcia back in US, charged with smuggling

Associated Press

To hear the Trump administration tell it, Kilmar Abrego Garcia smuggled thousands of people across the country who were living in the U.S. illegally, including members of the violent MS-13 gang, long before his mistaken deportation to El Salvador. In allegations made public nearly three months after his removal, U.S. officials say Abrego Garcia abused the women he transported, while a co-conspirator alleged he participated in a gang-related killing in his native El Salvador.

Abrego Garcia's wife and lawyers offer a much different story. They say the now 29-year-old had as a teenager fled local gangs that terrorized his family in El Salvador for a life in Maryland. He found work in construction, got married and was raising three children with disabilities before he was mistakenly deported in March.

The fight became a political flashpoint in the administration's stepped-up immigration enforcement. Now it returns to the U.S. court system, where Abrego Garcia appeared Friday after being returned from El Salvador. He faces new charges related to a large human smuggling operation and is in federal custody in Tennessee.

Speaking to NBC's Kristen Welker, President Donald Trump said it was not his decision to bring Abrego Garcia back. "The Department of Justice decided to do it that way, and that's fine," he said. "There are two ways you could have done it, and they decided to do it that way." Trump said it should "be a very easy case."

In announcing his return Attorney General Pam Bondi called him "a smuggler of humans and children and women" in announcing the unsealing of a grand jury indictment.

New disputes emerge before trade talks between US, China

Associated Press

U.S.-China trade talks in London this week are expected to take up a series of fresh disputes that have buffeted relations, threatening a fragile truce over tariffs.

Both sides agreed in Geneva last month to a 90-day suspension of most of the 100%-plus tariffs they had imposed on each other in an escalating trade war that had sparked fears of recession.

Since then, the U.S. and China have exchanged angry words over advanced semiconductors that power artificial intelligence, “rare earths” that are vital to carmakers and other industries, and visas for Chinese students at American universities.

President Donald Trump spoke at length with Chinese leader Xi Jinping by phone last Thursday in an attempt to put relations back on track. Trump announced on social media the next day that trade talks would

be held on Monday in London.

The latest frictions began just a day after the May 12 announcement of the Geneva agreement to “pause” tariffs for 90 days.

The U.S. Commerce Department issued guidance saying the use of Ascend AI chips from Huawei, a leading Chinese tech company, could violate U.S. export controls. That’s because the chips were likely developed with American technology despite restrictions on its export to China, the guidance said.

The Chinese government wasn’t pleased. One of its biggest beefs in recent years has been over U.S. moves to limit the access of Chinese companies to technology, and in particular to equipment and processes needed to produce the most advanced semiconductors.

“The Chinese side urges the U.S. side to immediately correct its erroneous practices,” a Commerce Ministry spokesperson said.

U.S. Commerce Secretary

Howard Lutnick wasn’t in Geneva but will join the talks in London. Analysts say that suggests at least a willingness on the U.S. side to hear out China’s concerns on export controls.

One area where China holds the upper hand is in the mining and processing of rare earths. They are crucial for not only autos but also a range of other products from robots to military equipment.

The Chinese government started requiring producers to obtain a license to export seven rare earth elements in April. Resulting shortages sent automakers worldwide into a tizzy. As stockpiles ran down, some worried they would have to halt production.

Trump, without mentioning rare earths specifically, took to social media to attack China.

“The bad news is that China, perhaps not surprisingly to some, **HAS TOTALLY VIOLATED ITS AGREEMENT WITH US**,” Trump posted on May 30.

Top Taliban leader slams travel ban on Afghans

Associated Press

The top Taliban leader on Saturday slammed President Donald Trump’s travel ban on Afghans, calling the United States an oppressor, as Afghanistan’s rulers seek greater engagement with the international community.

The comments from Hibatullah Akhundzada marked the first public reaction from the Taliban since the Trump administration last week moved to bar citizens from 12 countries, including Afghanistan, from entering the U.S.

Trump’s executive order largely applies to Afghans hoping to resettle in the U.S. permanently, as well as those hoping to go to America temporarily, including for university studies.

Since returning to power in Afghanistan in 2021, the Taliban have imposed harsh measures, banned women from public places and education for women and girls beyond the sixth grade. And though they have so far failed to gain recognition as the country’s official government, the Taliban have diplomatic relations with several countries, including China and Russia.

Akhundzada released his message on the Islamic holiday of Eid al-Adha, also known as the “Feast of Sacrifice,” from the southern city of Kandahar, where he has set up base but is rarely seen in public.

In a 45-minute audio recording shared by Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid on X, Akhundzada denounced the Trump administration for imposing “restrictions on people.”

He blamed the U.S. for the deaths of Palestinian women and children in Gaza, linking this allegation to the travel ban. “You are committing acts that are beyond tolerance,” he added.

Al-Qaida leader threatens Trump, others

Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — The leader of al-Qaida’s Yemen branch has threatened both U.S. President Donald Trump and billionaire Elon Musk over the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip in his first video message since taking over the group last year.

The half-hour video message by Saad bin Atef al-Awlaki, which spread online early Saturday via supporters of al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula, also included calls for lone-wolf militants to assassinate leaders in Egypt, Jordan and the Gulf Arab states over the war, which has decimated Gaza.

The video of al-Awlaki’s

speech showed images of Trump and Musk, as well as U.S. Vice President JD Vance, Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth. It also included images of logos of Musk’s businesses, including the electric carmaker Tesla.

“There are no red lines after what happened and is happening to our people in Gaza,” al-Awlaki said. “Reciprocity is legitimate.”

Though believed to be weakened in recent years due to infighting and suspected U.S. drone strikes killing its leaders, the group known by the acronym AQAP had been considered the most dangerous branch of al-Qaida still operating after the 2011 killing by U.S. Navy SEALs

of founder Osama bin Laden, who masterminded the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

In 2022, a U.S. drone strike in Afghanistan killed bin Laden’s successor, Ayman al-Zawahiri, who also helped plot 9/11. The Sept. 11 attacks then began decades of war by the U.S. in Afghanistan and Iraq, and fomented the rise of the Islamic State group.

Al-Awlaki already has a \$6 million U.S. bounty on his head, as Washington says al-Awlaki “has publicly called for attacks against the United States and its allies.” He replaced AQAP leader Khalid al-Batarfi, whose death was announced by the group in 2024.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Inmate convicted of killing other for being Black, gay

WI GREEN BAY — A Wisconsin man doing time for trying to kill his mother was convicted of strangling his cellmate to death.

A jury found Jackson Vogel, 25, guilty of first-degree intentional homicide in connection with the death of 19-year-old Micah Laureano at the Green Bay Correctional Institution last year, WLUK-TV reported. Vogel told investigators he killed Laureano because Laureano was Black and gay.

He is already serving a 20-year prison term handed down in 2018 for repeatedly stabbing his mother, strangling her and attempting to snap her neck, according to an appellate opinion upholding that conviction.

A guard found Laureano's body hanging from the top bunk of the cell he shared with Vogel on Aug. 27, according to a criminal complaint. Laureano's hands and feet were tied together with orange material.

Vogel, who is white, told the guard that he killed Laureano because Laureano was Black and gay, the complaint said.

Salvage crew bound for cargo ship that's on fire

AK JUNEAU — A salvage team is expected to arrive early this week at the scene of a cargo ship that was carrying about 3,000 vehicles to Mexico when it caught fire in waters off Alaska's Aleutian island chain.

A tug carrying salvage specialists and special equipment was expected to arrive at the location of the Morning Midas

around Monday, the ship's management company, London-based Zodiac Maritime, said. The crew will assess the ship's condition, and a separate tug with firefighting and ocean towage capabilities is being arranged, the company said in its statement.

The Coast Guard has said it received a distress alert around 3:15 p.m. Tuesday about a fire aboard the Morning Midas, which was roughly 300 miles southwest of Adak Island. The ship was carrying about 70 fully electric and about 680 hybrid vehicles, the Coast Guard said.

All 22 Morning Midas crew members were uninjured.

Sheriff arrested as part of gambling investigation

FL KISSIMMEE — A sheriff in central Florida was arrested on charges of racketeering and conspiracy as part of what state authorities described as a probe into a massive gambling operation.

Osceola County Sheriff Marcos Lopez was arrested on second-degree felonies and taken to the jail in nearby Lake County, Fla. Osceola County is south of Orlando, and part of the county is home to Walt Disney World.

Lopez took campaign contributions and personal payments as well as protected the gambling operation, according to a statement put out by Florida Attorney General James Uthmeier.

"As law enforcement, we are held to higher standards of integrity and character than other professions," Florida Department of Law Enforcement Commissioner Mark Glass said in a statement. "This case revealed

that Lopez violated the trust and integrity expected of him as the duly elected sheriff of Osceola County."

Mugger charged with stomping on cop's head

NY NEW YORK — A Bronx mugger who brutally assaulted an off-duty NYPD officer and robbed him of his gun, then fled to Virginia disguised with a woman's wig, was brought back to New York and charged with attempted murder of a police officer, officials said.

Wayne Lucas, 23, is also facing attempted robbery, attempted aggravated assault of a police officer, and weapons possession charges for the May 24 attack against police Officer Chowdhury Nafees, officials said.

Nafees, 27, was coming home from work and was wearing a jacket over his NYPD uniform when Lucas and Taveon Hargrove, also 23, attacked the cop at knifepoint near St. Peters and Tratman avenues in Westchester Square around 4:15 a.m., cops said.

Crane collapses, killing 2 at construction site

FL MERRITT ISLAND — Two people died after a giant crane collapsed at the construction site for a new central Florida hospital, officials said.

The collapse occurred Wednesday at the site of the new Cape Canaveral Hospital in Merritt Island, which is on the Atlantic coast about 60 miles east of Orlando.

Two people were transported

to a nearby hospital, where they later died, Brevard County Sheriff's Office spokesperson Tod Goodyear said. Officials didn't immediately identify the victims.

The area had been hit by rain and strong winds, but the exact cause of the collapse was under investigation.

Judge weighs request to unseal MLK Jr. records

DC WASHINGTON — A federal judge is weighing a request from the Trump administration to unseal records of the FBI's surveillance of Martin Luther King Jr. — files that the civil rights leader's relatives want to keep under wraps in the national archives.

U.S. District Judge Richard Leon in Washington, D.C., said during a hearing last week that he wants to see an inventory of the records before deciding whether the government can review them for possible release to the public.

"This is delicate stuff," Leon said. "We're going to go slowly. Little steps."

Justice Department attorneys have asked Leon to end a sealing order for the records nearly two years ahead of its expiration date. A department attorney said the administration is only interested in releasing files related to King's assassination.

The Southern Christian Leadership Conference, which King led, is opposed to unsealing any of the records for privacy reasons. The organization's lawyers said King's relatives also want to keep the files under seal.

— From wire reports

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Gauff tops Sabalenka for 1st French Open title

Associated Press

PARIS — Drawing on the painful memory of her defeat three years ago in the French Open final gave Coco Gauff just the motivation she needed to win the clay-court major for the first time.

The 21-year-old American defeated top-ranked Aryna Sabalenka 6-7 (5), 6-2, 6-4 on Saturday for her second Grand Slam title, two years after winning the U.S. Open.

"I think (the U.S. Open victory) was more emotional, but this one was harder," said Gauff, who managed to handle the elements and the momentum swings better than Sabalenka. "I knew it was going to be about will power and mental (strength)."

The victory put to rest the bad memories of her 2022 French Open final loss to Iga Swiatek when, as an 18-year-old, Gauff felt overwhelmed even before stepping onto Court Philippe-Chatrier.

"It was a tough time, I was doubting myself," Gauff recalled. "I was crying before the match, and so nervous, literally couldn't breathe and stuff."

Gauff said the lopsided loss rocked her confidence to such an extent that she was left "in a dark place" and feared she was not cut out for winning major titles.

"I thought if I can't handle this, how am I going to handle it again?" she said.

She handled it just fine Saturday.

The second-ranked Gauff made fewer mistakes and kept her emotions in check to get the better of Sabalenka again at major final, having come from a set down to beat the Belarusian in the 2023 U.S. Open final.

Gauff raised the winners' trophy aloft, then kissed it several times. She held her hand over her heart when the U.S. national anthem played.

"This one is heavy," Gauff said. "It feels great to lift it."

Gauff is the first American woman to win at Roland-Garros since Serena Williams in 2015.

It was the first No. 1 vs. No. 2 final in Paris since 2013, when Williams defeated Maria Sharapova, and just the second in the last 30 years.

After Sabalenka sent a backhand wide on Gauff's second match point, Gauff fell onto her back, covering her face with both hands as she started to sob, then got up and held her hand over her mouth. She continued to sob as she patted the clay with her left hand.

Gauff greeted Sabalenka at the net with a warm hug and thanking the umpire, Gauff screamed out with joy and relief, then got to her knees and crouched forward, continuing to cry as she savored the win.

She hugged later film director Spike Lee and celebrated with her entourage in her box before thanking the fans.

"You guys were cheering for me so hard," Gauff said. "I don't know what I did to deserve so much love from the French crowd."

One thing Gauff could not manage — yet — was a victory speech in French.

"I completely tanked on that," she said, adding that she will try in the future. "I don't think I could do a whole speech but maybe a good

something to say to the French crowd."

Sabalenka praised Gauff for being a "fighter" and said she deserved the win, but added that the windy conditions made for an error-strewn contest.

"This will hurt so much," Sabalenka said. "Coco, congrats, in the tough conditions you were a better player than me."

Both players were sloppy in the first set, conceding 21 break-point chances and making 48 unforced errors between them, with Sabalenka making 32 yet still winning the set. She made 70 altogether in the match, compared to 30 overall for Gauff.

Sabalenka was often frustrated, remonstrating and shouting at herself and frequently turning around to look at her team with an exasperated look on her face. She put her head on her hands a couple of times, and at one point raised her shoulders as if to say "What's going on?"

Gauff said she paid no attention, knowing full well that Sabalenka could find her best game at any moment.

Harrison, Dvalishvili celebrate as 135-lb. champs at UFC 316

Associated Press

NEWARK, N.J. — Kayla Harrison had just added UFC gold to her championship fight collection — and hugged it out with President Donald Trump — and still clutched the title belt when she bumped into Merab Dvalishvili backstage.

Dvalishvili was on cloud nine — well, make it 13 to match his winning streak — after he successfully defended his 135-pound championship with a dominant performance in the main event of UFC 316.

Two bantamweight champions. One big party.

"Congratulations, champ! Let me raise your hand," Dvalishvili told Harrison. "We are the champions!"

Dvalishvili then issued a quick pointer to Harrison — more used to wearing Olympic gold around her neck — on how to hold the belt for a photo opp.

Dvalishvili retained his 135-pound championship when he tapped out Sean O'Malley in

the third round and Harrison made 135-pound champion Julianna Peña quit with five seconds left in the second round in front of a crowd that included Trump and retired heavyweight great Mike Tyson on Saturday night at the Prudential Center.

Dvalishvili, a 34-year-old from the country of Georgia, won the belt in a convincing — though not aesthetically pleasing — unanimous decision last year over O'Malley. O'Malley realized after the loss to truly be at his best — as a fighter, as a family man — he needed to make difficult lifestyle sacrifices to round himself into peak form.

The 30-year-old contender quit smoking marijuana among other habits and also ditched his trademark dyed hair. No more cornucopia of colors that turned his locks into rainbows or cotton candy tops.

New look, same result.

Dvalishvili's win made the bantamweight champs 1-for-2 on the night.

Harrison, who said she struggled so hard

with cutting weight to 135 pounds she feared how she would make it in one piece ahead of the weigh in, continued to move up the list in a short time as one of the great female fighters in MMA history.

She's used to major victories in the spotlight.

No U.S. judoka — man or woman — had ever won an Olympic gold medal before Harrison beat Britain's Gemma Gibbons to win the women's 78-kilogram division at the 2012 London Olympics. She won gold again four years later at the Rio de Janeiro Games and made her MMA debut in 2018.

The 34-year-old Harrison was a two-time \$1 million prize champion in the Professional Fighters League lightweight championship division before she moved on to UFC last year. She won her first two UFC bouts and her record — now a sparkling 19-1 in MMA overall — coupled with her fame made her an instant contender for a title shot.

She needed just three UFC fights to become a champion.

Panthers, Oilers relish extra day's rest

Associated Press

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. — After Brad Marchand scored the winning goal in Game 2 of the Stanley Cup Final, he and Florida Panthers teammate Sam Bennett were asked how they kept their bodies going during another long and intense matchup against the Edmonton Oilers.

"I think (Marchand) grabbed a Blizzard ... I think it was Oreo today," Bennett quipped, referring to a viral moment during the Eastern Conference finals when Marchand joked that he enjoyed a chocolate chip cookie dough treat from Dairy Queen between periods — which was later revealed as a spoonful of honey.

"Nice plug," Marchand responded with a chuckle. "I like that."

They were joking, of course, but there was a point in Friday night's double-overtime game that Marchand spent time between periods pedaling on an exercise bike to stay loose — as players from both teams shuffled their tired bodies on and off the ice for hours.

The first two games of the

Stanley Cup Final went to overtime, only the sixth time in NHL history that's happened and the first since 2014. Game 1 went on until Leon Draisaitl's power-play goal 19:29 into the extra period. Marchand put Game 2 to an end with a breakaway goal 8:07 into the second overtime.

With the series tied 1-1, both teams will embark on a cross-continent trip from Canada to Florida, enjoying an extra day's rest between games to recover after an intense start to their championship series. Game 3 is Monday night in Sunrise, Fla.

"Obviously a long game, a lot of back and forth," said Panthers defenseman Seth Jones, who led Florida in ice time at 34 minutes, 35 seconds Friday.

Jones, who is averaging a team-high 25:45 on the ice in the postseason, played more than 30 minutes in both of the first two games of the series. He scored in the first period Friday — his fourth goal of the postseason — and assisted on Dmitry Kulikov's goal in the second.

"We came here for a split and got it," Jones added, "and just go-

ing to recover now."

Panthers coach Paul Maurice said heading back to Florida with the series tied — instead of being down 0-2 — does make a minor mental difference, but one of his team's strengths is its tunnel vision approach.

"It's mathematically significant," Maurice said. "I'd like to think that we'd be dragging here today, this morning, if we had lost that game having had the lead for so long. But I think we're really good at cutting it off."

"It's the same morning this morning at the meal room as it was two days ago (after the Game 1 loss). It's just on to the next day. We understand how to leave our days — the good ones and the bad ones — in the past and handle the day we have right now."

The Oilers are moving forward in the series with an equally short memory after missed chances in Game 2.

Corey Perry, whose goal with 17.8 seconds left in the third period forced overtime, said the back-and-forth nature of the series was to be expected from the

two teams, but there's no use in getting hung up on "what-ifs."

"What's it going to do?" Perry said. "It's not going to do anything for you now. Get on the plane tomorrow and get some rest and be ready for Game 3."

Few players have spent more time on the ice in the series than Connor McDavid. The Edmonton star played 31:12 in Game 1, and just over 35 minutes in Game 2 — more than anyone else in the game. That's nearly 10 minutes more than his postseason average of 24:22.

McDavid's impact was certainly felt Friday. He had three assists, including one in which he zipped through Florida's penalty kill to set up Draisaitl's power play goal in the first.

Draisaitl noted after the game that there's only one player in the world that can make such a highlight-reel play, but stressed the importance of using the two days off to recalibrate.

"At this time of year, you've got to move on," he said. "There's not time thinking about it too long. Obviously it stings right now, but we have to move on."

For Canadian friends, NBA Finals are all business

Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY — The NBA Finals. East vs. West. Indiana vs. Oklahoma City. Canada vs. ... Canada?

It sure seemed like it at times in Game 1 of the series, anyway — and odds are, there will be more of those moments throughout the rest of this matchup between the Pacers and Thunder.

There are four Canadians in the series, and two of them — NBA MVP Shai Gilgeous-Alexander for OKC and Andrew Nembhard for Indiana — went head-to-head plenty in Game 1.

Gilgeous-Alexander scored 38 points; Nembhard scored eight of his 14 in the fourth and was on the floor for the entirety of the Pacers' 32-16 run that ended the game and turned a 15-point deficit into a one-point win.

"He's a competitor. He's a winner," Gilgeous-Alexander said. "Plays the game the right way on both ends of the floor. Really

good player. Yeah, he's a winner for sure. No doubt."

They have been playing alongside each other since they were kids and were teammates on Canada's national team at the Paris Olympics in 2024.

"I think playing in the finals is a crazy experience," Nembhard said Saturday. "Walking onto the court was something you live for. The crowd was amazing. The noise was the most I ever felt in a game. It kind of all just came together. The nerves settled in, and it was a fun game."

He and Gilgeous-Alexander saw plenty of each other on both ends of the floor in Game 1, plus weren't afraid to mix it up with a little extra push here or choice words there. Nothing over the line, but enough to remind the other that it's all business right now.

"Nothing more than two guys wanting to win," Gilgeous-Alexander said. "No malicious intent behind it, just wanting to win."

The Thunder's Lu Dort and Indiana's Bennedict Mathurin are the other two Canadians in the finals.

The four Canadian players combined for 72 points in Game 1; that's the most ever in any finals game by players from any individual country other than the U.S.

That smashed the previous mark for points from Canadians in a finals game; it was 34, all from Jamal Murray, for Denver in Game 3 against Miami in 2023.

"It's amazing for our country," Nembhard said.

It's not just Gilgeous-Alexander who has long-time familiarity with Nembhard. Oklahoma City forward Chet Holmgren played with Nembhard at Gonzaga as well.

"Obviously, he's my guy, great dude," Holmgren said. "I have a lot of compliments for him as a basketball player and a person. But we're playing against him right now, so I'm going to hold on to all those."

Arenado, Cardinals walk off Dodgers

Associated Press

ST. LOUIS — Nolan Arenado delivered a pinch-hit RBI double in the ninth inning and the St. Louis Cardinals stifled the Los Angeles Dodgers' offense for a second straight game in a 2-1 victory on Saturday.

Nolan Gorman led off the ninth with a ground-rule double before being replaced with a pinch runner. After Pedro Pagés reached on an error by pitcher Ben Casparius (4-1), the Dodgers vacated left field to play with five infielders, and Arenado's lazy fly ball landed just inside the foul line and bounced into the stands for another ground-rule double.

The Dodgers, who lead the majors in scoring, home runs and batting average, were held scoreless for the first 17 innings of the series, but managed to tie it when Shohei Ohtani scored on a wild pitch by Ryan Helsley (3-0) in the top of the ninth.

It was the second straight blown save for Helsley.

Masyn Winn scored on Alec Burleson's infield single to put St. Louis ahead 1-0 in the eighth.

Erick Fedde walked four and struck out two in 5½ scoreless innings, giving up four singles. He allowed the first two batters to reach in the sixth before striking out Andy Pages. Steven Matz retired the next two batters to end that threat.

Dodgers starter Yoshinobu Yamamoto struck out nine in six scoreless innings, allowing four singles and two walks.

Cubs 6, Tigers 1: Chicago hit five home runs, including two by Seiya Suzuki, in a win over Detroit.

The Cubs, playing before a sold-out crowd of 41,334 in Detroit that appeared to be at least one-third Chicago fans, also got home runs from Michael Busch, Pete Crow-Armstrong and Matt Shaw.

Jameson Taillon (6-3) allowed one run on three hits and a walk in seven innings. He is

4-0 with a 1.68 ERA in his past four starts.

Suzuki gave the Cubs a 1-0 lead with a first-inning homer off Tigers opener Tyler Holton (2-3). Busch increased the margin to 3-0 with a long homer to right in the fifth.

Reds 4, Diamondbacks 3, (10), 1st; Reds 13, Diamondbacks 1, 2nd: Gavin Lux hit a grand slam, Christian Encarnacion-Strand homered for the second straight game and host Cincinnati routed Arizona after completing a suspended game with a victory in 10 innings.

TJ Friedl and Elly De La Cruz drew walks off Arizona starter Ryne Nelson, and Encarnacion-Strand hit his fourth homer for a 3-0 lead. Will Benson walked and took third on Tyler Stephenson's double before scoring on Spencer Steer's single. Jake Fraley drove in a run with a forceout for a 5-0 first-inning lead.

Blue Jays 5, Twins 4: George Springer hit a go-ahead, two-run homer in the eighth inning and visiting Toronto beat Minnesota.

Springer went deep against Twins reliever Griffin Jax (1-4), who allowed a leadoff double to Addison Barger one at-bat earlier. Springer's 10th homer of the season made it 4-3 just as a light rain started falling at Target Field.

Giants 3, Braves 2: Matt Chapman hit a two-run homer in the bottom of the ninth inning and host San Francisco beat Atlanta for its fourth straight win.

Heliott Ramos singled with one out against Braves reliever Pierce Johnson (1-3). After Wilmer Flores popped out, Chapman homered to left for his 12th of the season.

Pirates 2, Phillies 1: Henry Davis hit a tiebreaking solo home run in the bottom of the seventh inning to lift Pittsburgh to a home victory over Philadelphia after the slumping Phillies placed star first baseman Bryce Harper on the injured list be-

fore the game with right wrist inflammation.

Davis hit his fourth home run of the season and second in as many games to left-center off Ranger Suarez (4-1) on a first-pitch changeup to snap a 1-1 tie. The Pirates won for the third time in four games and can sweep the series on Sunday.

Rangers 5, Nationals 0: Jacob deGrom allowed two hits in seven shutout innings and Marcus Semien drove in three runs to lead visiting Texas to a victory over Washington that snapped a four-game skid.

DeGrom (6-2) threw 81 pitches and struck out eight while lowering his ERA to 2.12. Luke Jackson and Chris Martin each pitched a scoreless inning to close it out.

White Sox 4, Royals 1: Tim Elko hit a two-run homer, Adrian Houser pitched six strong innings and host Chicago beat Kansas City.

Chase Meidroth also went deep for the White Sox, who have won three straight for the second time this season.

Astros 5, Guardians 3, (10): Jake Meyers scored the go-ahead run on a wild pitch, Isaac Paredes drove in an insurance run and visiting Houston defeated Cleveland in 10 innings.

Yainer Diaz had a two-run homer in the sixth as the Astros won for the fifth time in six games.

Marlins 11, Rays 10, (10): Jesús Sánchez had a three-run homer and a two-run double, and Heriberto Hernandez singled in the go-ahead run in the 10th inning as visiting Miami outlasted Christopher Morel and Tampa Bay to snap a five-game losing streak.

Morel went 3-for-3 with two home runs, a double and four RBIs for the Rays, who had a four-game win streak halted.

Red Sox 10, Yankees 7: Trevor Story had five RBIs, Garrett Crochet struck out Aaron Judge three times and visiting Boston

beat New York to even their weekend series at one game apiece.

Story hit a three-run double for 5-3 lead in a five-run third against Ryan Yarbrough (3-1) and, after the Yankees closed to 10-7, added a two-run single in the ninth off Ian Hamilton.

Brewers 4, Padres 3: Caleb Durbin hit a walk-off homer leading off the ninth inning as host Milwaukee rebounded after squandering a late lead to beat San Diego.

After a two-run, two-out double by Luis Arraez tied it in the top of the ninth, Durbin ended it by sending the first pitch from David Morgan (0-1) over the wall in left-center field.

It was the rookie third baseman's second career homer — and first since April 21.

Angels 8, Mariners 6: Jo Adell homered twice, Chris Taylor also went deep and host Los Angeles rallied from four runs down and beat Seattle.

Cal Raleigh homered twice — giving him a major league-leading 26 — and drove in four runs for the Mariners, who have lost five straight and 12 of their last 17 games.

Mets 8, Rockies 1: Ronny Mauricio hit his first homer of the season, a 456-foot shot into the second deck, Francisco Lindor had three hits and two stolen bases, and visiting New York rolled past Colorado.

Jeff McNeil and Jared Young also homered and Brandon Nimmo and Luis Torrens each drove in two runs in a matchup of teams with the National League's best and worst records.

Orioles 7, Athletics 4: Colton Cowser hit a tiebreaking 455-foot home run in the sixth inning and visiting Baltimore held on to beat the Athletics.

Ramón Laureano also homered and had three hits and three RBIs to help the Orioles get their seventh win in eight games.