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Iraqi political unrest threatens US policy

The Washington Post

President Barack Obama's plan for fighting the Islamic State group is predicated on having a credible and effective Iraqi ally on the ground in Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi.

And in recent days, the administration had been optimistic despite the growing political unrest in Baghdad about that critical partnership.

But that optimism — along with the administration's strategy for battling the Islamic State group in Iraq — was thrown into severe doubt after protesters stormed Iraq's parliament Saturday and a state of emergency was declared in Baghdad. The big question for White House officials is what happens if Abadi — a critical linchpin in the fight against the group — does not survive the turmoil that has swept over the Iraqi capital.

The chaos in Baghdad comes just after a visit by Vice President Joe Biden that was intended to help calm the political unrest and keep the battle against the group on track.

"There's a realization that the government as it's currently structured can't hold," said Doug Ollivant, a former military planner in Baghdad and senior fellow at the New America Foundation. "It's just not clear how the Iraqis get out of this. I just don't see how they will."

It is equally unclear how the administration will move forward if Abadi is unable to consolidate his tenuous grip on power. For much of the past year, the Iraqi prime minister's survival was taken as a given by senior White House officials who were far more focused on the military fight against the Islamic State group.

The president and his top aides have pointed to battlefield gains against the group in Iraq as proof that the administration's much-criticized strategy was working. In the past 18 months, the Islamic State group has lost more than 40 percent of its territory in Iraq, according to U.S. officials.

Attacks on the group's banks in Mosul have blown up cash totaling from \$300 million to \$800 million, according to Pentagon estimates.

The political crisis in Baghdad began when Abadi made a bold push to replace politically connected members of his Cabinet with technocrats and reformers. The prime minister said his moves were intended to stamp out corruption.

But the proposals alienated powerful blocs and provoked raucous debates within the Iraqi parliament. Thousands of protesters threatened to storm the heavily fortified Green Zone, which is the seat of Iraqi power, but then seemed to back off in the days before Biden's arrival.

The dramatic turn of events, some analysts said, points to the critical flaw in the Obama administration's approach to the battle against the Islamic State group — emphasizing defeating the militant group over the much tougher task of helping Abadi repair Iraq's corrupt and largely ineffective government.

Other analysts said the Obama administration's campaign against the Islamic State group was, from the outset, too dependent on Abadi, a weak prime minister who is trying to survive in a political system overrun by cronyism and competing sects.

Philippine front-runner could hurt ties with US

BY WYATT OLSON

Stars and Stripes

MANILA, Philippines — U.S.-Philippines military relations that have flourished under President Benigno Aquino III likely would weaken if Philippine presidential front-runner Rodrigo Duterte is elected.

With Filipinos set to choose among five candidates on May 9, Duterte, the incumbent mayor of Davao City, who has said the U.S. "should not meddle in our affairs," holds a strong lead, according to the most recent polling.

"Duterte is very popular now because people are sick and tired of the same-old-same-old," said Virginia Bacay Watson, a professor at the Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies in Honolulu. "He's kind

of a fresh face, fresh perspective, compared to the other elites who are running."

Duterte has presented himself to voters as a straight-talker who is not part of the Manila elite — someone who can get things done even if he needs to bend the rules to do so. That includes the country's foreign affairs.

"He feels that American influence is too strong, that we're too dependent on U.S. intervention in anything we do," said Babe Romualdez, an opinion columnist for The Philippine Star newspaper.

"He was an activist when he was a student and young lawyer," Romualdez said. "I get a sense that he's saying the same things that most of the militants say."

Better NATO coordination urged to calm Baltic Sea

BY STEVEN BEARDSLEY

Stars and Stripes

NAPLES, Italy — The Navy destroyer USS Donald Cook left the Baltic Sea last week after a visit that raised new concerns over increasingly contested waters.

Russian fighter jets buzzed the warship in international waters on April 11 and 12, coming within 30 feet of its stern. Another fighter jet then barrel-rolled over an Air Force reconnaissance aircraft in a separate encounter two days later.

The incidents, the first after months of relative quiet in the region, are fueling calls for NATO to coordinate on maintaining access to the sea — and for Russia to avoid a misunder-

standing that could result in broader conflict.

"We are afraid that if you have such an accident or incident, then the other side would assume it wasn't an accident, that it was something done intentionally," said Lukasz Kulesa, research director at the London-based security think tank European Leadership Network. "Then the tensions can rise pretty quickly."

The onus is on Russia to pull back from aggressive operations that began in 2014, Kulesa said. Political discussion then needs to increase between both sides. Otherwise, he said, the region risks becoming overmilitarized as Western nations seek to offset the Russian posture.

US carrier denied access to Hong Kong port

BY WYATT OLSON

Stars and Stripes

China recently denied a request for a port visit by a U.S. carrier strike group to Hong Kong, according to the Pentagon.

"We were recently informed that a request for a port visit by a U.S. carrier strike group, including the USS John C. Stennis and accompanying vessels, to Hong Kong was denied," Defense Department spokesman Cmdr. Bill Urban said in a written statement.

The dates of the request and denial were not disclosed.

"We have a long track record of successful port visits to Hong Kong, including with the current visit of the USS Blue Ridge, and we expect that will continue," the statement said.

The Blue Ridge arrived in Hong Kong on Wednesday and will remain there until Tuesday, he said.

China has not issued a formal statement on the denial.

The move is likely China's response to a visit earlier this month by Defense Secretary Ash Carter to the Philippines, during which he and Philippines Defense Secretary Vol-

taire Gazmin flew to the Stennis strike group, then cruised in the South China Sea.

China and the Philippines are embroiled in a dispute over sovereignty of reefs and small atolls in the South China Sea. The U.S. has officially remained neutral on the sovereignty issue, but the U.S. Navy began so-called freedom-of-navigation patrols near the islands last fall.

U.S. officials have said that China is militarizing the disputed zone with airstrips and equipment.

China has objected to the U.S. patrols and also expressed dis-

pleasure with the joint visit to the Stennis.

During a news conference in Beijing on Thursday, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying said the U.S. is "exaggerating deliberately the China threat in the South China Sea."

Urban declined to say what other U.S. Navy ships are slated to visit China.

The South China Morning Post in Hong Kong reported that the Chinese Foreign Ministry said requests for port calls by U.S. warships were examined on a "case-by-case basis."

IG: Uncollected medical bills at LRMC exceed \$4M

BY JENNIFER H. SVAN

Stars and Stripes

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany — Delinquent medical accounts for patients seen at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center exceed \$4 million, according to a government report released Friday.

An audit of the largest U.S. military hospital overseas found more than 12,000 outstanding accounts totaling about \$4.6 million, the Defense Department inspector general said in its report. The Pentagon watchdog faulted U.S. Army Medical Command and Regional Health Command Europe Uniform Business Office for not effectively managing the accounts for LRMC and recommended that concerted efforts be made to collect delinquent accounts.

Inspectors looked at whether the hospital properly managed accounts that were more than 120 days delinquent, either by transferring the debt to a collection agency or by actively pursuing collection. They found that the agencies that handle billing for LRMC patients did not do either.

By law, agencies must transfer debts to the U.S. Treasury for collection when the debts have

not been paid for more than 120 days. The command's Uniform Business Office may also transfer debt to the Defense Finance and Accounting Service for collection from DOD employees or to U.S. Army Medical Command for collection from foreign governments, the report said.

Inspectors reviewed 25 of the highest-dollar delinquent accounts at LRMC. As of May 2015, those ranged from \$28,566 to \$337,845.

Since the audit, however, inspectors noted that some of these debts have been paid in full or transferred to a collection agency.

They also noted gaps as short as 196 days and as long as 1,064 days between follow-up efforts to collect payments.

In one example highlighted, a patient was discharged on Feb. 15, 2013, with services totaling \$40,594. The business office sent the patient a final delinquent debt notice on March 10, 2014. No further action was taken on the patient's debt until 455 days later, on June 8, 2015, when the office transferred the debt to the U.S. Treasury as a result of the audit, according to the report.

UN says North Korean claims against US 'unsubstantiated'

Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — The American-led U.N. command on Saturday dismissed as unsubstantiated accusations from North Korea that U.S. troops at a border village tried to provoke its front-line troops with "disgusting acts."

A North Korean military statement Friday warned U.S. soldiers to stop what it called "hooliganism" at the inter-Korean border village of Panmunjom or they'll meet a "dog's death any time and any place."

It said U.S. troops pointed their fingers at North Korean soldiers and made strange noises and unspecified "disgusting" facial expressions. It also said that American troops encouraged South Korean soldiers to aim their guns at the North.

A statement from Christopher Bush, a spokesman for the U.N. command, said they looked into the allegations and determined they were unsubstantiated.

North Korea occasionally accuses South Korean and U.S. troops of trying to provoke its border troops and vice versa. After North Korea's first nuclear bomb test in 2006, the U.S. accused North Korean troops of spitting across the border's de-

marcation line, making throat-slashing hand gestures and flashing their middle fingers.

The latest North Korean accusation came a day after South Korean and U.S. officials said two suspected medium-range missile launches by North Korea ended in failure. In recent weeks, North Korea fired a barrage of missiles and artillery shells into the sea in an apparent response to annual South Korea-U.S. military drills that ended Saturday.

About 28,000 American troops are deployed in South Korea to deter potential aggression from North Korea, a legacy of the 1950-53 Korean War, which ended in an armistice and not a peace treaty.

Panmunjom, located inside the 2.5-mile-wide Demilitarized Zone that bisects the Korean Peninsula, is where the 1953 armistice was signed. It remains one of the world's most dangerous flash points, but Panmunjom is also a popular tourist spot, drawing visitors on both sides.

Visitors from the southern side are often told by tour guides to be extremely careful about what gestures they make so as not to antagonize the nearby North Korean soldiers.

Spurs overwhelm Thunder in opener

Associated Press

SAN ANTONIO — The San Antonio Spurs dismantled the Oklahoma City Thunder — in a hurry.

LaMarcus Aldridge had 38 points as the Spurs beat the Thunder 124-92 on Saturday night, never trailing in Game 1 of the second-round series.

The Spurs scored the most postseason points against the Thunder and came within eight points of matching their largest postseason victory ever.

“Obviously, it kind of got away from them,” San Antonio veteran Tim Duncan said. “We didn’t expect that, but we’ll take it at the start of a series.”

Aldridge broke out for his best game of the season after Memphis held him to 14.5 points in the first round, nearly seven points below his regular-season numbers. He was 18-for-23 from the field, including his first three-pointer of the season and banking in a left-handed scoop shot as he was falling in the lane.

“It was just one of those nights,” Aldridge said. “I can’t take credit for it. I was just trying to play confident and ended up making some plays that I probably won’t make the next game. It was enough for me tonight.”

Kawhi Leonard added 25 points, five rebounds and five assists in 22 minutes for San Antonio. The Spurs led by as many as 43 points and sat their starters in the fourth quarter to rest them for Game 2 on Monday night.

Leonard and Aldridge combined for 45 points in the first half, outscoring Oklahoma City as a team by four. Unfortunately for the Thunder, the rest of the Spurs were just as impressive early.

San Antonio guard Danny Green was 5-for-6 on three-pointers in scoring 18 pointers and as a team the Spurs were 9-for-15 on threes.

“I think our defense ignited our offense,” Green said. “We were able to get out on the break by making it tough for them on that end of the floor, making them take some tough ones. They obviously didn’t get a rhythm. They were cold. Luckily for us, they missed a good amount of them, so we were able to get out on the break and we moved the ball well, took some uncontested shots and everybody kind of got a rhythm going.”

San Antonio matched a postseason franchise record for points in a quarter with 43 in the opening period.

“We didn’t have that sense of urgency tonight coming out of the gate for whatever reason,” Oklahoma City

guard Andre Roberson said.

Serge Ibaka led Oklahoma City with 19 points. Kevin Durant had 16 points, and Russell Westbrook added 14, but they were harassed into 11-for-34 shooting.

“They do a good job of helping,” Westbrook said. “Most of the time it’s help-side defender. Me personally, I never look at the guy in front of me. I look at the help see what’s the next move. Not a big problem, just got to find ways to read the help a little bit better, and make better decisions.”

San Antonio shot 82 percent in the opening quarter, including 3-for-4 on three-pointers in taking a 23-point lead. The Spurs also blocked six shots, collapsing and surrounding the Thunder with multiple defenders whenever they drove into the lane.

The only scare came when Leonard grabbed the back of his left leg after landing on it awkwardly off a powerful one-handed dunk on the game’s opening possession. San Antonio coach Gregg Popovich paced the sideline in concern, asking Leonard “are you OK?” on the Spurs’ ensuing possession. Leonard didn’t respond verbally, but his dynamic efforts on both ends of the court answered Popovich’s concerns.

Leafs win draft lottery

Associated Press

Brendan Shanahan went online to try the NHL draft lottery simulator just once, and was excited to see the Toronto Maple Leafs win the first pick.

Winning the real thing Saturday night felt a whole lot better, the team president acknowledged.

“Better than the simulator, I’ll tell you that,” Shanahan said after his last-place Leafs retained their spot in the draft order, putting them in a position to take U.S. center Auston Matthews with the first pick.

“I don’t know if it changes the timetable, but it certainly helps,” Shanahan said, referring to his plans to overhaul a franchise that has made the playoffs just once in the past 11 years. “We were confident we were going to get a player that would have an impact. And obviously, getting No. 1 certainly helps.”

With a 20 percent chance of landing the No. 1 pick, the Maple Leafs became the first last-place team to win the lottery and retain the top position in the draft order since the Edmonton Oilers in 2010.

The Winnipeg Jets made the largest jump, moving from the sixth to the second selection. The Columbus Blue Jackets moved up one spot to third.

What was also significant is the Oilers didn’t win. Edmonton dropped two spots, and will be picking fourth. The Oilers had the first pick in four of the previous six drafts and won the lottery three times, including last year when they jumped two spots and selected highly touted center Connor McDavid.

The Vancouver Canucks slipped from third to fifth. The Calgary Flames dropped one spot and will be picking sixth.

The order of the final eight teams stayed the same. The remaining positions will be determined based on the playoffs.

The draft will be held in Buffalo on June 24-25.

“We earned this the hard way. It wasn’t a whole lot of fun this year,” said Shanahan. “When you have an opportunity to pick first overall, it’s an important moment for the Toronto Maple Leafs.”

The Hall of Famer has made a big impact on rebuilding the Maple Leafs in just two years on the job. Last year, he lured coach Mike Babcock away from the Detroit Red Wings, and hired former New Jersey Devils general manager Lou Lamoriello.

Toronto also spent last year purging high-priced salaries, including trading Phil Kessel to Pittsburgh, in rebuilding through youth. William Nylander, a first-round pick in 2014, made a promising debut this past season. And the Maple Leafs have high hopes for center Mitch Marner, who was drafted fourth overall last year.

The Maple Leafs have had the first pick just once, in 1985 when they selected Wendel Clark.

Shanahan wouldn’t provide any hints as to which player the Leafs might select in June.

Listed at 6-foot-2 and 194 pounds, Matthews is an Arizona-born forward and rated by NHL Central Scouting as the draft’s top prospect. After spending three seasons playing for various USA Hockey developmental teams, Matthews elected to play for Zurich in Switzerland’s professional league. He had 24 goals and 22 assists for 46 points in 36 regular-season games, but managed just three assists in four playoff games before Zurich was eliminated.

Raiders trade for Cook

Associated Press

CHICAGO — Connor Cook watched as six quarterbacks came off the board before he was selected by Oakland with the second pick of the fourth round of the NFL Draft on Saturday while Andrew Billings tumbled all the way to Cincinnati at No. 122 after it looked as if he could be a first-round pick.

“Anytime you see another quarterback get drafted in front of you, it hurts,” Cook said. “I’m a competitor. Obviously, I think I’m one of the best quarterbacks in this draft class, but nothing is ever easy and nothing is ever perfect.”

Oakland already has Derek Carr, who threw for 32 touchdowns last season, but it traded up to take Cook in front of Dallas out of fear the Cowboys might be looking for a potential successor to Tony Romo. Dallas then grabbed a quarterback later in the round when it took Mississippi State’s Dak Prescott at No. 135.

Cook set Michigan State records with 9,194 yards passing and 71 touchdown passes for the Spartans.

But questions about his 57.5 completion percentage and leadership skills pushed him down the board.

“I don’t think you can win that many games and be that successful at a program without being a leader,” Cook said. “I think all that stuff was so far from the truth. Everything will work itself out.”

Billings was another one of the top names on the board coming into the day. He was a first-team AP All-American in his last season with Baylor, leading the Bears with 15 tackles for loss.

He joins a defense in Cincinnati that includes Geno Atkins, a 2010 fourth-round pick who turned into one of the best interior linemen in the league.

“My agent started going crazy when the third round passed,” Billings said. “We sat down and talked about it. Geno Atkins went in the fourth round as well. So the fourth round was good. Great, actually.”

Minnesota grabbed one of the draft’s

biggest wild cards when it took wide receiver Moritz Boehringer in the sixth round. Boehringer, who wowed teams with an impressive pro day, played in the German Football League last season.

According to the NFL, Boehringer is the first player from Europe to go in the draft without playing in college.

Southern Mississippi safety Kalan Reed is the new Mr. Irrelevant, going to Tennessee with the last pick.

Long before Reed and the Titans closed out the proceedings, the impressive showing for Ohio State continued on the draft’s third day. Linebacker Joshua Perry went to San Diego at No. 102, and quarterback Cardale Jones was drafted by Buffalo with the last pick of the fourth round for 12 in all.

Jones helped Ohio State win the national championship in 2014 and Perry made 105 tackles during his senior year with the Buckeyes, who had 10 players selected in the first three rounds, a record for the modern era of the draft since 1967.

After Jones went to the Bills, the next quarterback off the board was Stanford’s Kevin Hogan to Kansas City at No. 162. Baltimore drafted Navy star Keenan Reynolds in the sixth round, but he is expected to transition to wide receiver after rushing for a Division I-record 88 touchdowns with the Midshipmen.

Jacksonville continued its defensive focus when it selected Notre Dame tackle Sheldon Day at No. 103. Day had four sacks and two forced fumbles for the Irish this season.

The Jaguars also selected three defensive players in the first three rounds, including Florida State cornerback Jalen Ramsey at No. 5 overall, and UCLA linebacker Myles Jack in the second.

“Definitely shows that we’re definitely going to try to get after it and change everything about this organization and try to make us continue to propel forward,” Day said.



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Mets edge Giants, win eighth in a row

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Michael Conforto and Wilmer Flores homered as the New York Mets won their eighth in a row, building an early lead for Jacob deGrom and holding off the San Francisco Giants 6-5 Saturday.

San Francisco loaded the bases with no outs in the eighth inning and trimmed it to 6-5 with a pair of long sacrifice flies caught just in front of the outfield fence.

Jeury's Familia closed for his eighth save in as many chances while Conforto tied a Mets record by hitting a double in his sixth straight game. He also singled and drove in three runs.

Neil Walker hit a two-run single off Matt Cain (0-3), who has gone a career-worst 12 starts without a win, dating to his last victory July 22.

Nationals 6, Cardinals 1: Jayson Werth's three-run homer capped a four-run first inning in Washington's victory over host St. Louis.

Joe Ross (3-0) allowed one run in six innings, raising his ERA to 0.79. He has given up only two runs in 22 2/3 innings and bounced back nicely after skipping a turn because of a blister on his middle finger.

Werth added an RBI single in the eighth while Daniel Murphy had an RBI single off Jaime Garcia (1-2) in the first.

Tigers 4, Twins 1: Jordan Zimmermann won his fifth straight start since signing with Detroit while Justin Upton hit a three-run homer in the first inning to help the Tigers top host Minnesota.

Zimmermann (5-0) gave up one run with no walks and seven strikeouts over seven innings. His ERA actually rose to 0.55 as he became the first Tigers pitcher to win five games in April since Frank Tanana in 1988, according to STATS.

Athletics 2, Astros 0: Jesse Hahn pitched into the seventh inning in his return to the majors and combined with two

relievers on a four-hitter as Oakland held off visiting Houston.

The Astros loaded the bases in the ninth before Ryan Madson got Evan Gattis to ground into a game-ending double play for his eighth save, completing Oakland's first shutout this season.

Billy Burns drove in the only runs with a two-out single in the second.

Rays 4, Blue Jays 3: Curt Casali drove in the winning run with a single in the ninth inning as Tampa Bay beat visiting Toronto.

Brad Miller led off the ninth with a pinch-hit single off Brett Cecil (0-5). Miller beat first baseman Justin Smoak to the bag after a grounder. Kevin Kiermaier followed with a double before Casali's hit, the first game-ending hit of his career.

Logan Forsythe tied it for the Rays with a home run in the seventh after Kevin Pillar's first homer of the season gave Toronto a 3-2 lead. Forsythe went 3-for-3 and walked. Evan Longoria also homered for the Rays and Xavier Caden (2-0) got the win.

Red Sox 8, Yankees 0: Jackie Bradley Jr. and Mookie Betts had three RBIs apiece while David Ortiz homered again as host Boston blanked New York.

Rick Porcello (5-0) gave up five hits in seven innings to tie for the major league lead in wins. The right-hander has pitched at least six innings in each of his 13 starts since coming off the disabled list last August, the longest active streak in the majors.

The Yankees have lost four straight and 12 of 16. In their last four losses the Yankees have been outscored 25-5.

Pirates 5, Reds 1: Francisco Liriano won for the first time since opening day and John Jaso hit a leadoff homer as host Pittsburgh won its sixth straight and handed Cincinnati its sixth consecutive loss.

Liriano (2-1) allowed one run in 6 2/3 innings for his first win since April 3 against

St. Louis. The left-hander held the Reds to five hits and struck out six while walking none.

Jaso hit the first pitch from Alfredo Simon (0-3) for his first home run of the season and his fifth career leadoff homer. Sean Rodriguez added a two-run homer in the eighth.

White Sox 8, Orioles 7: Jose Abreu hit a tiebreaking single in the ninth inning off reliever Vance Worley, lifting visiting Chicago over Baltimore.

After Todd Frazier hit a two-run homer off Darren O'Day in the eighth to give the White Sox a 7-5 lead, Chris Davis tied it in the bottom half with a two-run double off Zach Duke. Those runs were charged to Matt Albers, ending his streak of 30 consecutive scoreless appearances.

Phillies 4, Indians 3: Freddy Galvis homered and hit the go-ahead single to lead host Philadelphia past Cleveland for its fifth straight victory.

The Phillies (14-10) have won eight of nine. Jeanmar Gomez had Phillies fans on edge in the ninth before he earned his eighth save. With runners on second and third, Jason Kipnis lined one to right that forced Peter Bourjos to leap and snag the ball for the final out.

Marlins 7, Brewers 5: Adeiny Hechavarria had four hits, including one of four solo home runs that helped Miami beat host Milwaukee.

Giancarlo Stanton, Derek Dietrich and Marcell Ozuna also homered as the Marlins won their seventh consecutive game.

Wei-Yin Chen (2-1) allowed three runs in 6 2/3 innings one night after the team took a combined no-hitter into the ninth. David Phelps got three outs for his first save.

Rangers 7, Angels 2: Rowned Odor matched a Rangers record with three doubles and Mitch Moreland hit a three-run homer as host Texas benefited from another replay challenge in a victory over

Los Angeles.

Odor's second double was part of the Rangers' six-run third inning. The play was initially ruled a foul ball, but manager Jeff Banister challenged the call. After a delay of about 3 1/2 minutes, the replay showed the ball kicked up a small bit of chalk and Odor was awarded a double.

Rockies 5, Diamondbacks 2: Trevor Story's two-run triple in the top of the ninth inning broke a tie as visiting Colorado beat Arizona.

Story, who homered in the four previous meetings between the teams this season, also doubled and drove in three runs for the Rockies, who have won four of five in Arizona this year.

Carlos Gonzalez had three of the Rockies' 13 hits. Nolan Arenado drove in a third run in the ninth, all off closer Brad Ziegler (1-1).

Padres 5, Dodgers 2: Melvin Upton Jr. hit a tiebreaking two-run double in the fifth inning as visiting San Diego also got RBI doubles from Wil Myers and Matt Kemp.

Colin Rea (2-1) allowed two runs and four hits over six innings in his Dodger Stadium debut, helping send the three-time defending NL West champions to their sixth straight loss. The 25-year-old right-hander's only mistake resulted in a two-run homer by Chase Utley in the third.

Mariners 6, Royals 0: Wade Miley scattered five hits for his first career shutout and Kyle Seager hit a three-run homer to cap a four-run first inning as Seattle handed visiting Kansas City its fifth consecutive loss.

Miley (2-2) struck out four and walked none for his second complete game in 139 starts. His only other complete game was last September with Boston in a 9-2 victory over Philadelphia, when he allowed two runs and five hits.

Fehr boosts Penguins

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Eric Fehr scored the tiebreaking goal against his former team with about 4 1/2 minutes remaining Saturday night, giving the Pittsburgh Penguins a 2-1 victory over the Washington Capitals that tied the Eastern Conference second-round playoff series at a game apiece.

Fehr redirected a pass out of a corner from Evgeni Malkin, sending the puck off the right post and past goalie Braden Holtby. Fehr played parts of nine seasons in Washington across two stints before leaving as a free agent last summer to join Pittsburgh.

Carl Hagelin had put Pittsburgh ahead in the second period of Game 2, before Marcus Johansson pulled Washington even on a power play with about 16 minutes to go in the third.

The series shifts to Pittsburgh for Game 3 on Monday night.

The Penguins improved to 43-0 this season, including the playoffs, when leading after two periods. They have not lost two consecutive games in 3 1/2 months.

This time, Pittsburgh recovered quickly from its 4-3 overtime loss in Game 1 on Thursday night, and did it in part by again shutting down Capitals captain Alex Ovechkin, who led the NHL with 50 goals this season.

While Penguins star Sidney Crosby didn't

factor in Saturday's scoring, either, Malkin did provide a spark on the go-ahead goal, and 21-year-old rookie goalie Matt Murray made 23 saves.

Holtby had 33 stops.

The tone for the scrappy game was established less than 4 1/2 minutes in, when Washington's Brooks Orpik leveled Olli Maatta with a high hit, and the Penguins defenseman fell backward, his helmet slamming to the ice. Maatta was helped off and did not return.

Orpik was to have a hearing Sunday with the NHL's department of player safety for the hit. He was given a minor penalty for interference on the play 4:13 into the first period Saturday night. He is facing a potential suspension for Game 3 on Monday and possibly beyond.

"I thought it was a late hit," Penguins coach Mike Sullivan said.

Orpik doesn't have a rap sheet with the NHL but does have a reputation for playing on the edge. While the Capitals did not make Orpik available to speak to reporters after the game, coach Barry Trotz said he spoke with the defenseman about the hit. Trotz relayed that Orpik thought the puck was coming back to Orpik and that he didn't intend to hit Maatta like that.

"He just finished on a hit," Trotz said. "There's a little size difference, and I think Maatta was leaning over a little bit. We'll let the league handle it."

Johnson leads Bolts past Islanders to even series

Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — Tyler Johnson continues to have postseason success.

Johnson had two goals and an assist and the Tampa Bay Lightning beat the New York Islanders 4-1 on Saturday to even the second-round series at a game apiece.

"That's one game," Johnson said. "We need three more."

Johnson has six career playoff multi-goal games, including two this season. The 5-foot-8 center scored an NHL-leading 13 goals in helping the Lightning reach the Stanley Cup final last season.

Lightning goalie Ben Bishop rebounded after being pulled in the second period of Game 1 to make 19 saves. He gave up four goals on 13 shots Wednesday night in a 5-3 loss.

"Game 1, a couple of unlucky bounces there," Bishop said. "You just come back the same way in Game 2. You don't change anything. That's just kind of been the way I do it."

Jonathan Drouin and Victor Hedman each had a goal and an assist for Tampa Bay.

"This was one we absolutely needed," Tampa Bay coach Jon Cooper said. "They came down here probably saying, 'Hey,

if we can split it's all good for us,' and we're probably a little disappointed that we split. But if you look at us after losing Game 1, we're sitting there saying, 'We have to have Game 2,' and we got it."

Nikolay Kulemin scored for the Islanders, and Thomas Greiss stopped 27 shots.

"I thought it was closer than it indicated," Islanders coach Jack Capuano said of the final score. "We've just got to bounce back. Guys have got to play a little better."

Game 3 is Tuesday night in Brooklyn.

"It's always disappointing when you do get the first one and that you can't go out and do it again," Islanders center Frans Nielsen said. "But going here, I think we would have taken it coming home 1-1."

After Islanders teammates Cal Clutterbuck and Nick Leddy collided at the Tampa Bay blue line, the Lightning got an odd-man rush that resulted in Johnson's backhand that opened the scoring 6:03 into the game.

"It gets the confidence going," Johnson said. "We were trying to get that first goal. We were able to do that and extend it."

The Lightning limited New York to just eight shots, including three during the third, over the final two periods.