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N. Korea may be nearer to goal of ICBM

By KIM GAMEL

Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korea's latest missile test was one of its most successful yet and may have been a major step toward its goal of developing an intercontinental ballistic missile that could reach the U.S. mainland, experts said.

The North's state-run news agency reported Monday that it had successfully tested a new ground-to-ground "medium long-range" ballistic rocket that could carry a heavy nuclear warhead.

The Korean Central News Agency said the missile traveled 490 miles and reached a maximum altitude of 1,311 miles on Sunday. While Pyongyang frequently exaggerates its claims, the distances were roughly similar to those given by U.S., Japanese and South Korean military officials.

The missile, called Hwasong-12, was fired "at the highest angle in consideration of the security of neighboring countries," KCNA said. "It also verified the homing feature of the warhead under the worst re-entry situation and accurate performance of detonation system."

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un oversaw the launch and was shown in photos published in state-run media watching as the missile was loaded onto a launcher and later smiling with military officials in apparent celebration.

Kim was quoted as warning the U.S. that its mainland and military operations in the Pacific are in "sight-ing range" and that North Korea "has all powerful means for a retaliatory strike."

North Korea has made faster-than-expected progress in its nuclear weapons program, which it claims is for self-defense, despite several rounds of tightened U.N. Security Council sanctions aimed at persuading it to denuclearize.

It's unlikely that the North has re-entry technology needed for the warhead to return safely back into the atmosphere, said South Korea Defense Ministry spokesman Moon Sang-gyun. He declined to discuss other KCNA claims about the missile technology, saying more analysis was needed.

Japanese officials have said the missile flew for half an hour and reached an altitude of about 1,240 miles before landing in the sea between the Korean Peninsula and Japan.

John Schilling, an aerospace engineer

and North Korea specialist, said the missile would have flown some 2,800 miles if launched on a maximum trajectory. That could put it in range of Andersen Air Force Base on Guam.

"North Korea's latest successful missile test represents a level of performance never before seen from a North Korean missile," he wrote on the 38 North website, which is run by the U.S.-Korea Institute at Johns Hopkins University.

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He said it "more importantly, may represent a substantial advance to developing an intercontinental ballistic missile" by testing ICBM subsystems such as engine performance.

"Given speculation over the past months about the possibility of military action by the Trump administration ... the possible testing of ICBM subsystems in this low-key manner may be a North Korean hedge against the possibility of such action," Schilling added.

North Korea has stepped up its nuclear weapons program since Kim took power in 2011 after his father, Kim Jong Il, died of a heart attack. It has conducted two underground nuclear tests and test-fired more than 30 missiles since last year.

Experts say it is likely a matter of years before the North has an operational ICBM, but it is not yet believed to have miniaturized a nuclear warhead that could be mounted on the missile or to have developed the technology for it to re-enter the atmosphere and hit its target.

The missile test was the first major security challenge for South Korean President Moon Jae-in, who said in his inaugural address last Wednesday that he would be willing to travel to Pyongyang to try to achieve peace on the divided peninsula.

Moon called the launch a "reckless provocation" and warned Pyongyang not to test his resolve, but he continued to dangle

the possibility of dialogue "if North Korea changes its attitude."

Mixed signals from US

President Donald Trump's administration has given mixed signals about its willingness to return to negotiations over North Korea's nuclear program. Trump has said he would meet with Kim under the appropriate conditions — although the White House walked back the statement, saying the conditions were not currently right.

Trump, who also has ordered warships to the region and vowed to keep the possibility of military action on the table, called for toughening sanctions after the launch. The U.N. Security Council planned to hold closed consultations about the launch on Tuesday.

A top North Korean diplomat, meanwhile, said her country would be willing to meet with the Trump administration "if the conditions are set," although she didn't elaborate. Choe Son Hui, Foreign Ministry director general for North American Affairs, spoke to reporters Saturday in Beijing after leading a delegation in an informal meeting with former U.S. officials in Norway, according to The Associated Press.

There have been several such informal meetings since official six-party negotiations involving North and South Korea, the U.S., China, Russia and Japan broke down in 2008. Washington has insisted the North agree to abandon its nuclear program before resuming talks.

Woo Jeung-Yeop, director of the center for security policy at the Asan Institute for Policy Studies in Seoul, said the latest missile test is an example of the North's determination to be accepted internationally as a nuclear power.

"When they say they want to talk, it means on their own terms," he said in a telephone interview. "They want to be in a better position if they enter negotiations ... so they will try to make the stakes very high."

U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Nikki Haley appeared to rule out the possibility of talks, saying the U.S. would continue to "tighten the screws" on North Korea and claiming Kim Jong Un is in a "state of paranoia."

"Having a missile test is not the way to sit down with the president, because he's absolutely not going to do it," she said Sunday on ABC's "This Week" program.

Stars and Stripes reporter Yoo Kyong Chang contributed to this report.

US accuses Syria of mass prisoner killings

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration on Monday accused the Syrian government of carrying out mass killings of thousands of prisoners and burning the bodies in a large crematorium outside the capital.

The State Department said it believed that about 50 detainees per day are being hanged

at Saydnaya military prison, about 45 minutes from Damascus. Many of the bodies are then being burned in the crematorium, it said.

“We believe that the building of a crematorium is an effort to cover up the extent of mass murders taking place in Saydnaya prison,” said Stuart Jones, the top U.S. diplomat for the Middle East.

The department released

commercial satellite photographs showing what it said is a building in the prison complex that has been modified to support the crematorium.

The photographs taken during the course of several years, beginning in 2013, do not definitely prove the building is a crematorium, but they show construction consistent with such use.

One photograph taken in

January 2015 shows one area of the building’s roof cleared of snow due to melt.

In presenting the photographs, Jones said Syrian President Bashar Assad’s government “has sunk to a new level of depravity” with the support of Russia and Iran and called on both countries to use its influence with Syria to establish a credible cease-fire and to begin political talks.

Activists: Dozens of civilians killed in Syria raids

Associated Press

BEIRUT — Air raids on a village and a town in Syria held by Islamic State have killed at least 32 civilians during the past two days, activists said Monday, underscoring the risk for hundreds of thousands of residents trapped in areas under the militant group’s control ahead of the looming battle for Raqqa.

The U.N. envoy for Syria, meanwhile, insisted that the latest round of peace talks between the government and the opposition in Geneva are serious after President Bashar Assad said last week that they were just for show.

Staffan de Mistura assured reporters that the government delegation attending the talks is “here to work.” The talks are scheduled to begin Tuesday and last around four days.

The envoy declined to comment on Assad’s remarks, aired by Belarus ONT television on Thursday. The Syrian leader said “nothing substantial” would come from the talks and that they were “merely a meeting for the media.”

The delegations aren’t expected to meet face-to-face, and de Mistura has called for reduced media involvement to foster a more “businesslike” atmosphere.

It was not immediately clear who was behind the strikes on the village of Akayrshi on Sunday and the town of Bouka-

mal on the Syrian-Iraqi border Monday, and activists blamed the U.S.-led coalition.

The coalition, in an emailed response to The Associated Press, said it did not conduct airstrikes on Boukamal on Monday. It added, however, that the coalition had conducted strikes near the western edge of Akayrshi and would assess the reports.

The coalition has come under increasing scrutiny by monitoring groups regarding civilian casualties in the fight against ISIS in both Iraq and Syria. The Pentagon acknowledged late last month that at least 352 civilians have been killed by coalition strikes in the two countries since the start of the air campaign against ISIS in 2014.

However, activists and monitoring groups say the number is much higher. Access is restricted to ISIS-held areas, and details are hard to come by.

The raid on Boukamal took place about 3 a.m., according to the activist-run Justice for Life, with fighter jets striking a mosque and surrounding houses. Omar Abu Laila, of the activist-run Deir Ezzor 24, said the airstrikes destroyed 15 homes and killed at least 20 civilians who had fled from other areas in Iraq and Syria.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said 23 civilians were killed, with the toll likely to rise. Ob-

servatory director Rami Abdurrahman said ISIS fighters also were killed.

The Observatory said 12 women were killed in the strikes on the village of Akayrshi, while the activist-run Raqqa is Being Slaughtered Silently said the strikes hit a convoy of farm workers, killing 22 people.

The ISIS-run Amaq news agency claimed 22 women were killed and eight were wounded in a drone strike on a bus in Akayrshi, which is about 10 miles from Raqqa, the group’s self-styled capital. It said another 25 civilians were killed in Boukamal.

U.S.-backed and Kurdish-led Syrian forces are advancing on Raqqa after capturing several nearby towns and villages from the extremists.

The Trump administration last week authorized the Pentagon to supply the force with heavy weapons for the Raqqa campaign, rankling Turkey, which says the fighters are affiliated with Kurdish insurgents operating within its own borders.

President Vladimir Putin praised the Syrian Kurdish force as “one of the most efficient units” battling ISIS and said Moscow has “working contacts” with them, but he said his country is not planning to provide arms. Putin said the Kurds “have other sources of obtaining the weapons.”

Nicholson meets with airmen at Bagram

By E.B. BOYD

Stars and Stripes

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan — Pilots and airmen from the 555th Fighter Squadron briefed the top U.S. commander in Afghanistan about air operations and the ordnance used against militants fighting government forces during his visit to this base on Saturday.

Gen. John Nicholson also met with special operations troops at the NATO Special Operations Component Command.

The 555th, deployed from Aviano Air Base in Italy, has been using F-16s in the fight against insurgent groups, including Islamic State, which has set up a presence in eastern Afghanistan.

At the NSOCC, Nicholson received a briefing on the ground fight against ISIS and handed out coins to 18 team members who have performed with distinction.

As Afghan forces battle Taliban guerrillas, the U.S. has made it a priority to eradicate ISIS from the eastern part of the country before their comrades, fleeing Syria and Iraq, begin looking for safe havens.

Officials: Alcohol a factor in Yokota civilian's crash

Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — A Yokota civilian was under the influence of alcohol before the car he was driving crashed into another vehicle, injuring its occupant, Japanese officials alleged Monday.

A man in his 20s was taken to the hospital after the accident, which happened about 6 p.m. on May 7, a North Kanto Defense Bureau spokesman said. The man sustained minor injuries to his neck, he said.

The driver was identified only as a base worker in his 40s, the spokesman said.

The base worker had not been arrested as of Monday and voluntarily was being questioned by police, according to a Kyodo News report.

Japanese broadcaster NHK reported that the driver ran through a red light before crashing into another vehicle.

Japanese defense officials made a complaint to the base urging preventive measures, the spokesman said.

A liaison committee comprising representatives of local governments near Yokota also filed a complaint with the base on Thursday.

"We regret that the accident could have led to a serious accident since ... alcohol was involved," said Asako Suyama, of the metropolitan government's U.S. Military Facilities Relations Division. "It causes concern among the residents," she said.

Air Force officials did not immediately respond to requests for information about the accident.

Navy ship trains to defend against unmanned boats

Stars and Stripes

The Navy recently tested its newest and largest amphibious-assault ship's ability to defend against small, unmanned attack boats.

More than 1,800 sailors and 2,600 Marines assigned to the USS America Amphibious Ready Group and the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit exercised last week off the coast of Southern California in preparation for a deployment later this year.

The group includes the amphibious dock landing ship USS Pearl Harbor and the amphibious transport dock USS San Diego.

The 45,000-ton America is capable of carrying F-35B Lightning II fighters, V-22 Osprey tilt-rotor aircraft and various other helicopters.

Exercise aimed at boosting policing in Mediterranean

BY SCOTT WYLAND

Stars and Stripes

Thirteen Mediterranean countries are taking part in this year's Phoenix Express, an exercise aimed at improving their ability to protect vital shipping lanes and to thwart human trafficking, drug smuggling and other criminal activities.

Sponsored by U.S. Africa Command, the 11-day maritime policing drills were launched last week in Cartagena, Spain, and will end on Friday. Most of the at-sea simulations are being carried out in North African waters.

It has the same purpose as the much larger Obangame Express held in March.

A key difference is that Phoenix Express involves European and North African countries that abut the Mediterranean, while Obangame's emphasis was on western African nations.

Capt. Daniel Hopkins, the tactical command officer for the exercise, said it had evolved since it began 13 years

ago.

"It gets better because of the people that make sure the boardings go correctly," Hopkins said. He added that the people who assess the training also work to make it more effective every year.

This year's participants are Algeria, Croatia, Egypt, Greece, Italy, Malta, Mauritania, Morocco, the Netherlands, Spain, Tunisia, Turkey and the U.S.

Various nations' maritime forces must cooperate, communicate and conduct search-and-seizure raids on ships properly. One exercise tests their ability to combat the smuggling of illegal goods.

Teams also work together to practice search and rescue for vessels in distress.

"Ideally, the participating nations leave Phoenix Express with a baseline skill set that they can continue to build on, train from and evolve into a competent boarding team," said U.S. Coast Guard Lt. Andrew Ray.

'Material issue' repair delays carrier Reagan's departure

BY ERIK SLAVIN

Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — The USS Ronald Reagan's departure has been delayed due to an unspecified issue aboard the aircraft carrier, Navy officials said Monday.

"While in port Yokosuka and conducting routine pre-underway checks, a material issue was identified that requires repair," said a Navy statement issued Monday. "There is no impact to the safety of the aircraft carrier."

The maintenance issue delays the departure of the carrier, its embarked air wing and multiple accompanying ships comprising the carrier strike group.

"Details are still being coordinated and will be dependent upon the length of the repair," the statement said.

The Ronald Reagan successfully completed sea trials on Friday, Navy officials said. The ship and its air wing

also completed carrier landing practice earlier this month at Iwo Jima, which is also known as Iwo To.

The Ronald Reagan Strike Group is embarking on its regularly scheduled patrol at a time of increased tensions in the Asia-Pacific region as North Korea continues to develop its nuclear weapons program.

The San Diego-based USS Carl Vinson strike group's Asia patrol was extended about a month amid a series of North Korean missile launches and speculation that the communist state could soon conduct a nuclear test.

Meanwhile, China has continued developing and militarizing territory in the South China Sea claimed by several of its neighbors.

China has also increased patrols near the Japan-administered Senkaku Islands, which Beijing claims as its territory.

Erdogan, Trump to meet amid tense times

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The United States is on a collision course with its NATO ally Turkey, pushing ahead with arming Syrian Kurds after deciding the immediate objective of defeating Islamic State militants outweighs the potential damage to a partnership vital to U.S. interests in the volatile Middle East.

The Turks are opposed to the U.S. plans, seeing the Kurdish fighters as terrorists. When Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan visits the White House on Tuesday, the most he and President Donald Trump may be able to do is agree to disagree, and move on.

“The Turks see this as a crisis in the relationship,” said Jonathan Schanzer, at the Washington-based Foundation for Defense of Democracies.

The challenge is hardly new. Long before Trump took office, U.S. presidents have grappled with the fragility of partnering with Turkey’s government and the Kurds to carry out a Middle East agenda. Past administrations have sought a delicate balance. Too exuberant in its support for the Kurds, and the U.S. risks pushing ally Turkey toward U.S. geopolitical rivals or emboldening the Kurds to try to create an independent state — which would destabilize multiple countries.

Too little cooperation with the Kurds risks squandering a battlefield ally with proven effectiveness against extremist threats and who has staunchly supported Washington.

Trump has made his priorities clear. His administration is arming Syrian Kurdish fighters as part of an effort to recapture the Syrian city of Raqqa.

The Turks fear any weapons the U.S. provides the Syrian Kurds could end up with their ethnic brethren in Turkey, who’ve fought violently as part of a separatist insurgency for more than three decades.

Worldwide ‘ransomware’ attack spreads as many return to work

Associated Press

TOKYO — The worldwide “ransomware” cyberattack spread to thousands of more computers on Monday as people logged in at work, disrupting business, schools, hospitals and daily life, though no new large-scale breakdowns were reported.

In Britain, whose health service was among the first high-profile targets of the attack Friday, some hospitals and doctors’ offices were still struggling to recover.

The full extent of the damage from the cyberattack felt in 150 countries was unclear and could worsen if more malicious varia-

tions of the online extortion scheme appear.

The initial attack, known as “WannaCry,” paralyzed computers running factories, banks, government agencies and transport systems in scores of countries, including Russia, Ukraine, Brazil, Spain, India and Japan. Among those hit were Russia’s Interior Ministry and companies including Spain’s Telefonica and FedEx Corp. in the U.S.

Though the ransomware continued to spread at a more subdued pace on Monday, many companies and government agencies were still struggling to recover from the first attack.

Carmaker Renault said one of its French plants, which employs

3,500 people, wasn’t reopening Monday as a “preventative step” while technicians deal with the aftermath of the attack.

Britain’s National Health Service said about a fifth of NHS trusts — the regional bodies that run hospitals and clinics — were hit by the attack Friday, leading to thousands of canceled appointments and operations. Seven of the 47 affected trusts were still having IT problems Monday.

In Asia, where Friday’s attack occurred after business hours, thousands of new cases were reported on Monday as people came back to work. Chinese state media said 29,372 institutions there had been infected.

Court backs collection firms in debt suit

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A divided Supreme Court ruled Monday that debt collection companies can’t be sued for trying to recover years-old credit card debt from people who seek bankruptcy protection.

The 5-3 ruling is a blow to consumer groups that complain debt collectors are unfairly misleading people into repaying old debts even when they are not required to under the law.

The court sided with Midland Funding, which was try-

ing to collect \$1,879 in debt an Alabama woman had incurred more than 10 years earlier. Aleida Johnson argued that Midland was wrong to go after the debt because Alabama law has a six-year statute of limitations for a creditor to collect overdue payments.

While Johnson ultimately avoided paying the debt, a federal appeals court said she could sue Midland for trying to collect it as a violation the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act. That law prohibits collection companies from making a “false, deceptive, or misleading

representation” or trying to recover debt through “unfair or unconscionable means.”

Writing for the majority, Justice Stephen Breyer broke with his liberal colleagues to say efforts to recoup old debt during the bankruptcy process do not violate the law. He said it wasn’t false or misleading because bankruptcy law technically allows such claims.

Breyer said it wasn’t unfair or unconscionable because a bankruptcy trustee can object to any claims that are so old they don’t have to be repaid.

Justices reject NC’s bid to use voter ID law

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court on Monday rejected an appeal to reinstate North Carolina’s voter identification law, which a lower court said targeted blacks “with almost surgical precision.”

The justices left in place the lower court ruling striking down the law’s photo ID re-

quirement and scaling back of early voting.

The situation was complicated when Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper and Attorney General Josh Stein tried to withdraw the appeal, which first was filed when Republican Pat McCrory was governor.

The dispute is similar to the court fight over Texas’,

also struck down as racially discriminatory.

Republicans in both states moved to enact new voting measures after the Supreme Court in 2013 struck down a provision of the federal Voting Rights Act that had required them to get advance approval before changing laws dealing with elections.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Stray emu lassoed on highway by authorities

NM LAS CRUCES — A stray emu that had become notorious throughout a three-day span in southern New Mexico has been captured by law enforcement.

Authorities caught up with the emu May 9 after about 40 minutes of trying to lasso it on an interstate. Calls about the bird started coming into the Dona Ana County Sheriff's Office three days before the emu was captured.

New Mexico State University housed the bird at one of its agricultural facilities until the owner picked it up Thursday. The owner wasn't identified, and authorities said it's unclear how the bird got loose.

Firefighters battle fire at own station

VA SPRINGFIELD — Firefighters in Virginia did not have to go far to battle a blaze, which started at their own fire station.

Capt. Mark Menton, of Fairfax County Fire & Rescue, said the alarms were heard about 1 a.m. Sunday.

Officials believe a firetruck that was parked in the station caught fire and spread to the attic area. The flames went through the roof of the building, melted equipment and torched the truck. It took about 40 minutes to get the fire under control.

Topless cleaning service owner arrested

ME BANGOR — A woman who offers a semi-nude cleaning service was arrested on suspicion of stealing underwear.

Police in Bangor said the woman is the owner-operator of a business called Topless Clean-

ing. She is accused of shoplifting undergarments from a local business.

Bangor Police Sgt. Tim Cotton left a lengthy, humorous post about the arrest on the police department's Facebook page. He said the woman "had stolen garments that would fully cover, support, and contain much of what her business title promised her customers."

Police didn't identify the woman arrested. She's charged with shoplifting and violating conditions of release.

Man driving carjacked car gets out, is hit, dies

NJ IRVINGTON — A man was killed on the Garden State Parkway when he got out of the carjacked vehicle he was driving and tried to cross the highway on foot.

State police said Keith Belton, 24, of East Orange, N.J., was driving north in Irvington when he stopped in the center lane around 1:45 a.m. Saturday. He then crossed the barrier into the southbound lanes at mile marker 144.7 and was hit by an SUV traveling in the left lane. Belton was pronounced dead at the scene.

Authorities said the vehicle Belton was driving had been carjacked out of Elizabeth. A state police spokesman said it's still not clear if Belton was involved in the carjacking.

Inflatable sculpture of ballerina unveiled

NY NEW YORK — A massive inflatable ballerina created by artist Jeff Koons is the latest public art installation at New York's Rockefeller Center.

The 45-foot work is called "Seated Ballerina." It was unveiled Friday and will be on display through June 2. The nylon sculpture is based on a porce-

lain figurine of a ballerina in a blue tutu. Koons said the work "conveys optimism and a sense of potential for the future." He said the sculpture is intended to bring awareness to National Missing Children's Month.

"Seated Ballerina" is the third Koons work to take up residence at Rockefeller Center.

Student accused in laxative-brownie case

ID POST FALLS — Police in northern Idaho said they are investigating after a student was accused of putting laxatives in homemade brownies and distributing them to his classmates.

Students at River City Middle School in Post Falls complained of sickness and headaches last month after eating brownies given to them by a fellow classmate, who has not been identified. Several students told police they paid for the brownies because they thought they contained marijuana.

Police said the student who brought the brownies told his probation officer that the laxative-laced dessert was supposed to be a prank. He denied promising anyone that the brownies had marijuana in them. The student was suspended from school for five days and faces other possible charges.

Yearbooks confiscated over Trump slogan

NC ROCKINGHAM — A North Carolina school district confiscated yearbooks at one high school after officials saw a senior's quote that read, "Build the Wall."

Local media reported that yearbooks distributed at the Richmond Early College High School near Rockingham were recalled because some senior quotes were considered controversial.

School district spokeswoman Ashley-Michelle Thublin said school and district officials found several quotes were inappropriate. She said that included the "Build the Wall" comment that became one of President Donald Trump's campaign slogans last year.

Thublin said none of the students is being disciplined. It's too late to get the books reprinted, so students are getting refunds.

Woman charged over leaving unruly child

SC ROCK HILL — Police said a Rock Hill woman faces charges after she left her 7-year-old child alone for 45 minutes to punish her.

The Herald reported that Kecia Barham was charged Thursday with unlawful conduct toward a child.

A Rock Hill police report says Barham told an officer the child was acting out of control so she punished her by leaving her alone.

Police were called after a resident of the apartment complex found the child standing alone by the mailboxes.

Mom of quintuplets marks Mother's Day

KY LEXINGTON — Briana Driskell marked her first Mother's Day after giving birth to healthy quintuplets at a Kentucky hospital. Her next goal is taking them home.

Media outlets reported the three girls and two boys were delivered May 2 at University of Kentucky Chandler Hospital.

Driskell, 29, entered the hospital in her 22nd week. The babies were delivered by cesarean section at 28 weeks.

From wire reports

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Curry, Golden State rally to edge Spurs

Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. — Stephen Curry started the rally in the third to get Golden State going, then Kevin Durant was determined to do his part in the fourth.

Two of the biggest stars on one side delivered when the best player on the other went down.

Curry scored 40 points and hit a tying three-pointer with 1:48 remaining, and the Warriors rallied from way behind after Kawhi Leonard was lost to an ankle injury to beat the San Antonio Spurs 113-111 on Sunday in Game 1 of the Western Conference finals.

“It’s the playoffs. You’ve got to expect everything,” Curry said. “I wouldn’t call it smooth sailing at all. We’ve actually had to execute and get to this point. They came out and challenged us heavy, put a nice little run together. It took us a minute to figure it out to get up to that game speed after this little break. It’s definitely a nice way to win Game 1. We’ve got to capitalize off that and start Game 2 a lot better.”

Draymond Green gave Golden State the lead for good on a three-point play after the Warriors trailed by as many as 25 points.

Leonard left in the third quarter after he reinjured his left ankle, and the Warriors

capitalized with an 18-0 run.

Durant scored 10 straight points during a key fourth-quarter stretch on the way to 34 points, while Zaza Pachulia had 11 points and nine rebounds.

Leonard had 26 points and eight rebounds. LaMarcus Aldridge produced another clutch playoff performance with 28 points and eight boards.

Somehow, these unusually careless, cold-shooting Warriors found a way to keep their unblemished postseason record alive at 9-0.

Game 2 in the series is Tuesday night back at Oracle Arena.

Curry scored 19 points in the third quarter and went 7-for-16 on threes and 14 of 26 overall as the Warriors overcame their largest halftime deficit ever in the postseason at 20 points.

Leonard first went down after stepping on a teammate’s foot along the bench after taking a shot. Pachulia later slid toward him as he came down from shooting and Leonard fell into the Spurs bench, grabbing his ankle.

Losing Leonard could be the story of this series, though coach Gregg Popovich had no update except that Leonard hurt the same foot. He shot 7 of 13 in 23 minutes to

go with eight rebounds and three assists. He made all 11 of his free throws.

He sat out Game 6 of the last round against Houston, a 39-point, series-clinching win on Thursday, after injuring the ankle in a Game 5 overtime victory.

“It’s a tough break. He’s coming from an injury on that ankle and he tweaked it twice in the last minute he played,” Manu Ginobili said. “So we couldn’t react to his absence.”

Popovich lost to good friend and old pupil Mike Brown, filling in as Warriors acting coach for the ailing Steve Kerr — who played for Popovich.

Yet for much of the afternoon, the Spurs outplayed the mighty Warriors on both ends of the floor.

While Kerr spoke to the team at halftime, he watched the game from behind the scenes in the arena a day after returning to the practice floor for the first time in more than three weeks.

“He’s gone through hell,” Popovich said pregame. “I’m sure most people don’t really know, and I’ll leave that to him to describe as much as he wants to describe. But it’s been very difficult for him. He’s shown a lot of courage getting through what he’s gone through.”

Leonard’s injury spotlights debated, dangerous play

Associated Press

Kawhi Leonard had already launched his jump shot and Zaza Pachulia kept sliding toward him while Leonard was in the air.

Leonard landed on Pachulia’s foot and crashed to the court in pain.

Dirty? Possibly.

Dangerous? Absolutely.

The play that knocked Leonard out of the game with an injured left ankle and helped Golden State’s huge rally in Game 1 of the Western Conference finals is one the NBA started cracking down on four seasons ago in an effort to protect shooters.

But with long-distance shots playing such a heavy role in offenses these days, the risk of injury isn’t going away.

Nor is the debate — one the Spurs have seen from both sides — that raged long after the Warriors’ 113-111 victory Sunday. While Leonard is re-

spected for the way he defends without fouling, opponents hated the way former defensive ace Bruce Bowen crowded too closely on their jumpers.

“We see this quite often in the NBA where that defender, they just go a little too far and you’re not allowed to take the landing area away from the jump shooter,” Joe Borgia, the NBA’s senior vice president of replay and referee operations, said Sunday while discussing the foul that was called on Pachulia on his “Making the Call” video segment on NBA.com.

“Obviously a very dangerous situation for players, and the referee luckily stayed on that play all the way until the shooter landed and the foul was called on the play.”

That wasn’t enough for ABC analyst Jeff Van Gundy, who argued that Pachulia should have been called for a flagrant one for intentionally sliding under Leonard, which both players denied.

“Did he step under it? Like on purpose? No,” Leonard said afterward. “He was contesting a shot. The shot clock was coming down. I’ll have to see the play.”

Pachulia said he was just trying to contest the shot and seemed surprised at first that a foul was even called, though many observers on social media thought the play looked suspect.

“Zaza’s not a dirty player. You’ve got to time that perfectly if you want to hurt somebody,” teammate Kevin Durant said. “We’re not that type of team. Kawhi’s an unbelievable player. We’ve got nothing but respect for him. We wish that he gets healthy. We just tried to contest a shot. Guys are playing hard. It was an unfortunate situation, I wish it didn’t happen, but I don’t think it was intentional. You can’t listen to people on Twitter, they’re irrational.”

But they aren’t the only ones lately wondering if one of those fouls was intentional. Markieff Morris did the same after the

Washington forward landed on Al Horford’s foot in Game 1 of their Eastern Conference semifinal, knocking him out of a game the Celtics rallied to win.

Realizing the potential for ankle injuries — a problem for Warriors star Stephen Curry earlier in his career — the NBA made the play one of its points of emphasis for officials before the 2013-14 season, stressing that shooters had to be given the freedom to land. But in a series like the West finals, matching the Warriors’ lethal outside shooters against a Spurs team that led the league in three-point percentage during the regular season, neither team is going to want to allow too much space.

That’s all Pachulia had in mind.

“I just did what I was supposed to do and challenged his shot,” Pachulia said. “I didn’t notice that he was down until I turned back actually. So I didn’t see what happened there.”

Yankees honor Jeter, retire his number

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Derek Jeter held a microphone and spoke without notes to the crowd that filled sold-out Yankee Stadium. His No. 2, the last of the single digit pinstripes, had been retired and a plaque in his honor dedicated that will be placed in Monument Park alongside tributes to Ruth, Gehrig, DiMaggio, Mantle, Berra and the rest of the team's greats.

"There isn't a person or player I would trade places with that's playing now or ever," he told the fans.

Three years removed from a big league career that spanned 1995-2014, Jeter personally picked Mother's Day for his tribute. His grandmother, parents, sister, nephew and pregnant wife joined him, and he laughed when he saw the plaque, which reads "DEREK SANDERSON JETER/'THE CAPTAIN'/MR. NOVEMBER'" and goes on to call him "THE CORNERSTONE OF FIVE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP TEAMS" AND "A LEADER ON THE FIELD AND IN THE CLUBHOUSE, SETTING AN EXAMPLE FOR HIS TEAMMATES WITH HIS UNCOMPROMISING DESIRE FOR TEAM SUCCESS."

Jeter recalled flashing back to the plaques of teammates Bernie Williams, Jorge Posada and Andy Pettitte unveiled

in recent years.

"When Bernie got his, he had the big mole. When Jorge had his, he had the big ears. Andy had the big nose. So I was happy with mine," Jeter said.

Now 42, Jeter captained the Yankees during his final 12 seasons, capping a career that included five World Series titles, a .310 batting average and a New York-record 3,465 hits. He is the 22nd player to have his number retired by the Yankees, by far the most among major league teams.

"I want to thank my family for their love, support, honesty and more importantly their presence at everything I did both on and off the field," he said during a speech that ended the 40-minute ceremony. "And the fans — wow — I want to thank you guys for pushing me, for challenging me, making me accountable, more importantly for embracing me since day one."

Jeter decided not to use notes as he addressed the crowd of 47,883.

"When I prepare speeches I forget part of it, and then none of it makes sense," he said later.

New York appropriately played two on Derek Jeter Night, a doubleheader against Houston caused by a rainout Saturday, and the festivities took place between an 11-6 win and a 10-7 defeat.

Former teammates Mariano Rivera, Paul O'Neill, Tino Martinez, David Cone and Hideki Matsui also were on hand. Alex Rodriguez was not — spokesman Ron Berkowitz said A-Rod was in Miami, spending time with his mother and daughters.

Several of the players whose numbers had been retired previously wore a new Monument Park navy blazer, and one also was given to Jeter by Houston's Carlos Beltran, a former Yankees teammate who suggested the idea last year to equipment manager Rob Cucuzza. Reggie Jackson was on the field in shirt sleeves.

Among players on the most recent Yankees dynasty, Posada (20), Rivera (42), Pettitte (46) and Williams (51) also had their numbers retired.

"Having five people from that group is kind of hard to believe," Jeter said. "When we were in it, we used to constantly have conversations about it: You never look back at anything that we had accomplished, it was always what's next."

"Eventually, nothing is next because you're retired, but we all had those same mindsets, and that's why I think we had success," he said. "We went out there day in and day out trying to win, trying to do anything to help the team and more importantly trying to keep our jobs."

Bregman helps Astros split DH in New York

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Proudly wearing No. 2 in tribute to Derek Jeter, Alex Bregman drove a splitter into the left-field seats, capping a six-run first inning off Masahiro Tanaka with his first home run this season and first big league grand slam.

As he rounded third base on Mother's Day, he pointed toward his mom Jackie in the stands. She was raised on Long Island in East Islip, rooted for the Yankees and named the family's dog, a Labrador Retriever, after Jeter.

"Guess it was the No. 2 magic tonight," Bregman said with a grin. "My mom grew up the biggest Jeter fan ever."

George Springer led off the game with a drive into Monument Park just after Jeter's number was retired there in a pregame ceremony. Josh Reddick homered off the facing of

the right-field second deck on the next pitch, and Springer also homered leading off the second. The Houston Astros built a nine-run lead and held on for a 10-7 win over New York and a doubleheader split Sunday.

"It was always kind of our dream to be able to play here and play in the big leagues and playing in her home city," Bregman said. "Watching her favorite team, watching her favorite player get his jersey retired was a pretty special moment."

Bregman homered just as Jeter was holding a news conference under the stands following the between-games ceremony, which came after the Yankees rallied for an 11-6 win in the opener. The 23-year-old third baseman, who made his big league debut last year, viewed the tribute from Houston's dugout.

"You get chills watching some of those moments: the flip, the

home runs, the jump throws in the hole," said Bregman, whose only disappointment was he did not get to meet Jeter.

Houston gave Bregman the silent treatment when he reached the dugout. The Astros, a big league-best 26-12, chased Tanaka when Carlos Beltran added an RBI double with two outs in the second.

Tanaka (5-2) left to jeers with New York trailing 8-0, the most runs he allowed in his major league career. The homers tied his high.

"I didn't get my job done, so they have all the right to boo me," Tanaka said through a translator.

Backed by a 9-0 lead, Charlie Morton (5-2) gave up four runs in 5²/₃ innings, including Matt Holliday's three-run homer in a four-run fifth. Morton had 10 of the 16 strikeouts by Astros pitchers, including seven in a row, as Houston took three of four in the

series. Astros closer Ken Giles got the final out in a three-run ninth, retiring Aaron Hicks on a comebacker with two on. Chase Headley, in a 1-for-24 funk, hit a tiebreaking, bases-loaded triple off Chris Devenski in a six-run seventh inning that overcame a 6-4 deficit.

"It was pretty important, not only for myself but, obviously, for the team," said Headley, whose batting average had dropped from .304 on May 5 to .256.

Looking pretty in pink in special Mother's Day uniforms, the AL East leaders trailed 3-1 before Starlin Castro's tying, two-run homer off Mike Fiers in the fourth. Aaron Judge followed with his major league-leading 14th homer, a 441-foot drive off the padding above the center field restaurant behind Monument Park.

Emotional win for Rockies' Senzatela

Associated Press

DENVER — Colorado's Antonio Senzatela emphatically pointed to the sky as he closed out the fifth inning on Sunday.

It had been an emotional Mother's Day for the 22-year-old rookie.

Pat Valaika homered twice and drove in four runs, Senzatela got the win and the Rockies beat the Los Angeles Dodgers 9-6.

Senzatela (6-1) was pitching on Mother's Day for the first time since his mom died of breast cancer last July. Like many around the league, Senzatela used a pink bat to raise awareness about the disease. He also wrote his mother's name, "Nidya," on his pink and white cleats.

"I feel good," Senzatela said. "Too many emotions in my heart now."

The rookie right-hander is tied for the majors' lead in wins. He allowed four runs in five innings, his shortest outing since his first career start at Milwaukee on April 6.

Nolan Arenado also went deep as the Rockies hit their first homers of the series to salvage a four-game split. Their lead in the NL West is back up to 1½ games.

Phillies 4, Nationals 3, 6: Ace Max Scherzer endured a scary line drive to grind out six innings while Michael Taylor hit a go-ahead two-run homer in the eighth and host Washington overcame another dodgy bullpen outing in the nightcap for a doubleheader split.

Bryce Harper went 3-for-4 with an RBI double in Game 2. He also hit his 12th home run in Game 1 but Philadelphia won the opener of the day-night affair after Washington's third blown save in six games.

Rangers 6, Athletics 4: Nomar Mazara had the go-ahead hit for the second game in a row as the host Rangers extended their winning streak to a majors-best six in a row.

Cardinals 5, Cubs 0: Yadier Molina homered twice for the

host Cardinals and Adam Wainwright threw seven sparkling innings.

Angels 4, Tigers 1: Angels star Mike Trout homered in his third straight game and Alex Meyer pitched three-hit ball into the seventh inning for the host Angels.

Brewers 11, Mets 9: Manny Pina hit a three-run homer with two outs in the eighth inning, capping host Milwaukee's comeback from a six-run deficit.

Royals 9, Orioles 8: Mike Moustakas homered and drove in four runs to help host Kansas City rally for the win.

Blue Jays 3, Mariners 2: Kevin Pillar homered with two outs in the ninth inning to give host Toronto a sweep of the four-game series.

Rays 11, Red Sox 2: Steven Souza Jr. hit a three-run homer and Jesus Sucre drove in three runs as Tampa Bay beat host Boston.

Indians 8, Twins 3: Jason Kipnis homered twice and drove in four runs to help the host Indians snap a three-game losing streak.

Marlins 3, Braves 1: Tyler Moore hit a three-run homer in the seventh inning to spoil a shutout bid by R.A. Dickey as the host Marlins broke a five-game losing streak.

It was Moore's first homer of the year and the fourth pinch-hit shot of his career.

White Sox 9, Padres 3: Pinch hitter Melky Cabrera had a key two-run single in host Chicago's eight-run eighth inning.

Cabrera, whose hit went through the right side of the infield, was one of 14 batters in the inning against three San Diego relievers.

Giants 8, Reds 3: Brandon Belt homered again, helping host San Francisco to its first three-game winning streak of the season.

Pirates 6, Diamondbacks 4 (10): Jose Osuna hit a two-run homer for host Arizona with two outs in the 10th inning and Tony Watson escaped a bases-loaded jam in the bottom of the inning.

Ducks even series with Predators

Associated Press

ANAHEIM, Calif. — The Anaheim Ducks were down a game in the Western Conference finals and down 2-0 in Game 2 against Pekka Rinne, the most dominant goalie in these Stanley Cup playoffs.

That's when Sami Vatanen got the puck and thought he saw a sliver of room over Rinne's shoulder.

"So I just closed my eyes and shot it in there," Vatanen said with his usual Finnish deadpan delivery.

After every slow start and tight game over their past month, not much can ruffle these Ducks. Once they opened a crack in Rinne and the Nashville Predators, they started a deluge that evened the series.

Nick Ritchie broke a tie late in the second period, and Anaheim roared back from that early two-goal deficit for a 5-3 victory Sunday night.

Just when the Ducks appeared to be in serious danger of losing two straight home games to start their second straight series, they made a thrilling surge of four goals in less than 19 minutes.

"Everybody says we go about it the hard way, but as long as we get the job done," shrugged John Gibson, who stopped 30 shots.

Vatanen, Jakob Silfverberg and Ondrej Kase also scored for the Ducks before Antoine Vermette added an empty-netter. The Predators hadn't allowed four goals in any game during their excellent Stanley Cup playoff run before Anaheim got five in front of its sell-out crowd.

"I wish we didn't get down in the first place, but I think we have three or four lines that get going and just keep punching through," Ducks forward Rickard Rakell said. "It's almost like we feel, 'Oh, we've got nothing to lose now.' It's almost

like that's when we play our best game. Maybe sometimes we shouldn't wait for that to get going."

Game 3 is Tuesday night in Nashville.

Rinne made 22 saves and Ryan Johansen, James Neal and Filip Forsberg scored for the Predators. They faced relatively little adversity while steamrolling Chicago and St. Louis in the first two rounds on the way to the first conference finals in franchise history.

Nashville has a serious challenge now, and adversity has arrived in the form of Ryan Kesler, the Ducks' defense-minded center. Johansen had a goal and an assist, but Kesler's well-known style of physical play already has burrowed under his skin.

"I mean, it just blows my mind watching," Johansen said. "I don't know what's going through his head over there. Like his family and his friends watching him play, I don't know how you cheer for a guy like that. It just doesn't make sense how he plays the game. I'm just trying to go out there and play hockey, and it sucks when you've got to pull a stick out of your groin every shift."

Two days after Nashville's 3-2 overtime victory at Honda Center in the series opener, Johansen and Neal scored in the opening 8:32 of Game 2.

The Ducks eventually got around to replying with high-octane hockey — and a few fortunate bounces — that was too much even for Rinne, who hadn't given up four goals in a game since March 13.

"The second (period), they got to control the tempo of the game and had the puck a little bit more, and obviously that plays into their hands," Rinne said. "But we still battled back. Obviously, disappointed personally in that second period."