

STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Military clout on NSC could shift policy

The Washington Post

When President Donald Trump's top foreign policy advisers gathered recently at the White House to discuss plans to revamp the administration's Afghanistan strategy, the makeup of those in the room was indicative of a significant turn in U.S. foreign policy.

Seated front and center in the Situation Room table were four current or former generals who dominate just about every big national security decision Trump makes. The debate, however, was most notable for the voices that were absent.

Intended as a crucial final debate session before the plan went to the president, the meeting took place on a day in which Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, the president's top diplomat, was in New York. His acting deputy attended in his place.

The generals at the table included national security adviser Lt. Gen. H.R. McMaster; Gen. Joseph Dunford, chairman of

the Joint Chiefs of Staff; and former four-star generals Defense Secretary Jim Mattis and Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly. Most of those in attendance emerged believing that the Afghanistan plan was ready to go to the president for final approval, U.S. officials who took part in the session said.

Unbeknown to the White House, America's top diplomat was not on board: Tillerson, who heads a department that some White House officials described as "AWOL" during the review process, didn't think the plan did enough to address other countries in the region with a stake in Afghanistan, such as Pakistan, Iran and India, a person familiar with his thinking said.

Tillerson also was concerned that the plan called for beefing up the State Department's presence in dangerous locations outside Kabul.

Even though the State Department remains understaffed at its top ranks, department of-

ficials said it had been an active participant in the review and insisted that a final decision on the emerging plan was probably weeks away. A State Department spokesman declined to comment on the ongoing discussions until "the group arrives at a decision point."

The disconnect over a major policy shift, with big implications for the Pentagon, the State Department and the federal budget, illustrates the sway military officers exercise in the Trump administration. Current and former military officers not only hold positions at the highest ranks of government but also fill senior staff jobs in the White House that have traditionally been the purview of civilians or experienced diplomats.

According to a review by *The Washington Post*, at least eight out of 25 senior policy and leadership positions on the National Security Council are held by current or former military officials, up from two at the end of the Obama administration.

The shift in staffing reflects Trump's faith in the nation's warriors and his delight in shows of military force. On the campaign trail and in office, he has promised to "knock the hell" out of Islamic State and take a harder line against an array of adversaries, including North Korea and Iran.

To some analysts, the heavy presence of military officers on the NSC, many of whom helped forge the Bush administration's do-or-die response to a spiraling insurgency in Iraq, is a much-needed corrective inside the White House. They say that a stable and sustainable outcome in such places as Iraq, Yemen and Syria cannot be achieved quickly or on the cheap.

Other experts worry that the officers' immersion in the wars of the past 15 years have made it hard for them to take a broad view of U.S. power and influence in the world that extends beyond armed conflict in the Middle East and South Asia.

Special operations forces facing more demands, risks

Tribune Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — With special operations forces now posted in more than 80 countries, the ever-increasing set of missions and uptick in casualties give pause even to some military experts and veterans who support the expanding role.

"You talk about mission creep — this is strategic mission creep all over the world," said retired Lt. Gen. Mark Hertling, a 37-year Army veteran. "Special operations just isn't sized to do that."

Gen. Raymond Thomas, who heads Special Operations Command, apparently agrees. He told the Senate Armed Services

Committee this month that his forces are stretched thin, with little downtime between deployments, a situation he called "unsustainable."

The Pentagon said the rapid rate of deployments has taken a toll, and not just in recent casualties.

"We've mortgaged the future in order to facilitate current operations," Theresa Whelan, acting assistant secretary of defense for special operations, told the House Armed Services Committee in May.

"There's been misuse and overuse of our special operation forces in recent years," said Rep. Scott Taylor, R-Va., a former Navy SEAL. "We need to

be more discriminatory in how we use these forces because, in many ways, the future of the command depends on it."

In most countries, special operations teams are chiefly assigned to train and coordinate with local government security forces. They are reportedly embedded with local soldiers on the front lines in only a crucial handful of countries where terrorist groups operate openly.

In Iraq, special operations forces are working with Iraqi units trying to clear Islamic State from its redoubt in Mosul, calling in airstrikes and advising on tactics. Hundreds more play support roles in staging bases.

Special Operations Command was established at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, Fla., after the failed attempt to rescue 52 U.S. Embassy staff held hostage in Iran in 1980. The debacle embarrassed the Pentagon and contributed to President Jimmy Carter's loss in the election that year.

The turning point for the command came after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. As the George W. Bush administration prosecuted what it called a global war on terrorism, the command's experience in clandestine operations and guerrilla warfare helped it track terrorist networks in the Middle East, the Horn of Africa and elsewhere.

Army discharges soldier who had fought alongside Ukrainian rebels

The Washington Post

A well-known militant who fought with Russia-backed separatists in Ukraine and participated in far-right European politics before joining the U.S. Army has been discharged from the military, a spokeswoman for the Army said.

Earlier this month, The Washington Post reported that Pfc. Guillaume Cuvelier, 29, had spent time with French ultranationalist groups before helping create an anti-Western militant group in eastern Ukraine in 2014. After leaving Ukraine in 2015 and fighting alongside Kurdish peshmerga in Iraq, Cuvelier shipped to U.S. Army basic training in January.

Before his discharge last week, Cuvelier — a dual French and U.S. citizen — was serving as a newly minted infantryman in a Hawaii-based unit, according to records provided by the Army.

In a short exchange in April, Cuvelier confirmed his service in the Army and his time in Ukraine.

Lt. Col. Jennifer Johnson, an Army spokeswoman, would not give the reason Cuvelier was discharged, saying it was protected under the Privacy Act of 1974.

Cuvelier's discharge was neither honorable nor dishonorable, Johnson said in an email.

"Soldiers who are in an entry-level status because they have served less than 180 days of continuous active duty are normally discharged with an uncharacterized description of service," she said.

Cuvelier's past of espousing extreme right-wing views and his role in an armed group backed by a U.S. adversary was recorded on websites, social media groups and in an online documentary. With Cuvelier's easily searchable history, his enlistment raises questions about the Army's recruitment process and whether applicants are thoroughly vetted.

Kelli Bland, a spokeswoman for the U.S. Army Recruiting Command, did not respond to a request for comment, nor did Cuvelier.

When it was first reported that Cuvelier was serving in the Army, Bland said the military had "begun an inquiry to ensure the process used to enlist this individual followed all of the required standards and procedures."

The Army often forbids those who display "extremist views or actions" from entry, Lt. Col. Randy Taylor, a spokesman for the Army's Department of Manpower and Reserve Affairs, said in an email in April. Taylor added that "if an Army official determines an applicant has the potential for meeting Army standards, the official may in exceptional cases allow those who have overcome mistakes and past conduct, made earlier in their lives, to serve their country. However, in many cases a history of gang or extremist activity is disqualifying."

In Cuvelier's case, it appears his past was either overlooked by a recruiter or he was not forthcoming about it, a move that might have opened him up to fraudulent enlistment charges under the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

Cuvelier, when first confronted about his potentially problematic history in April, said he had changed.

"The Army is my only chance of moving on and cutting with my past," Cuvelier said in a text message. "I realized I like this country, its way of life and its Constitution enough to defend it."

"By publishing a story on me, you are jeopardizing my career and rendering a great service to anyone trying to embarrass the Army. My former Russian comrades would love it ... so, I please ask you to reconsider using my name and/or photo."

As a U.S. citizen, Cuvelier's time fighting in Ukraine for the Donetsk People's Republic could open him up to federal prosecution as the breakaway state is subject to U.S. government sanctions.

A March 2014 executive order that was applied to the republic that June says U.S. citizens are prohibited from assisting any of the sanctioned entities with "funds, goods or services."

Polish, Afghan forces free 11 people held 4 months by Taliban

WARSAW, Poland — Polish and Afghan special forces, backed by U.S. air power, freed 11 people who had been taken hostage by the Taliban in Afghanistan's Helmand province, Polish Defense Minister Antoni Macierewicz said Tuesday.

The hostages included two soldiers, four police officers and five civilians, all Afghan nationals who had been held captive for four months in a prison by the Taliban,

Macierewicz said in Warsaw.

He said the action showed that the Afghan forces are well trained and able to "combat terrorists." Polish special forces were primarily involved in preparing the operation and had a supporting role, but the Afghan forces did the fighting and U.S. Air Force helicopters also took part, he said.

From The Associated Press

SEAL killed during Fleet Week is ID'd

Associated Press

JERSEY CITY, N.J. — A Navy SEAL who fell to his death when his parachute failed to open during a Fleet Week demonstration over the Hudson River has been identified as a Colorado man.

The accident that killed Remington J. Peters, 27, occurred Sunday at Liberty State Park, a large New Jersey park across from Manhattan where people catch ferries to see the Statue of Liberty.

Peters, whose identity was revealed late Monday, was a member of an elite Navy parachute team called the Leap Frogs. He will be "painfully missed," his family said in a statement released by the U.S. Navy.

"He was an angel on earth and role model to all," the statement said. "We couldn't have been more proud of him. He lived life to the fullest and taught us to do the same."

The cause of the parachute malfunction that killed Peters is under investigation.

Peters was among four parachutists who drifted down from two helicopters. The Navy said he was pulled from the water by the U.S. Coast Guard. His parachute landed in a parking lot.

USS Ford clears 'acceptance trials'

Associated Press

NEWPORT NEWS, Va. — The Navy's newest aircraft carrier has completed another round of sea trials.

Local news media outlets report that the future USS Gerald R. Ford completed "acceptance trials" on Friday after three days at sea. The \$12.9 billion carrier is expected to be commissioned this summer.

The ship completed tested various state-of-the-art systems during its first round of sea trials in April.

Construction on the Ford started in 2009. It was supposed to finish by September 2015, with costs at \$10.5 billion. But there were issues with the carrier's advanced systems and technology, including aircraft landing equipment and power generation.

WH communications director resigns

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A top White House communications staffer has resigned as President Donald Trump considers a major staff overhaul.

The departure of Michael Dubke, Trump's communications director, comes as aides say Trump has grown increasingly frustrated by allegations of Russian meddling in the 2016 election and revelations of possible ties between his campaign and Moscow.

Trump tweeted Tuesday: "Russian officials must be laughing at the U.S. & how a lame excuse for why the Dems lost the election has taken over the Fake News."

Dubke wrote in a statement that it had been an honor to serve Trump and "my distinct pleasure to work side-by-side, day-by-day with the staff of the communications and press departments."

Dubke's last day has not yet been determined.

A Republican consultant, Dubke joined

the White House team in February after campaign aide Jason Miller — Trump's original choice for communications director — withdrew from consideration. Dubke founded Crossroads Media, a GOP firm that specializes in political advertising.

Dubke is the latest White House staffer to leave this administration as scrutiny intensifies over contacts Trump staffers may have had with Russian government officials during the campaign and transition period.

White House counselor Kellyanne Conway told The Associated Press on Tuesday that Dubke resigned before Trump left for his international trip earlier this month, suggesting that his departure is not linked to any pending shake-ups. But his departure raises questions about whether previous Trump loyalists are headed to the White House. Trump has entertained formally bringing back his former campaign manager, Corey Lewandowski, and former deputy campaign manager, David Bossie.

Bossie told Fox News' "Fox & Friends"

that the Trump administration has reached out to him but hasn't offered him a job yet.

"They have talked to many people, including me," Bossie said. He later added, "It's an ongoing conversation and that's a fair way to put it."

Dubke's hiring was intended to lighten the load on Sean Spicer, the White House press secretary, who had also been handling the duties of communications director during Trump's first month in office. Trump has privately pinned some of the blame for his administration's rough start on the White House's communications strategy.

While overseas, Trump's longtime lawyer, Marc Kasowitz, joined a still-forming legal team to help the president shoulder the intensifying investigations into Russian interference in the election and his associates' potential involvement. More attorneys with deep experience in Washington investigations are expected to be added, along with crisis communication experts, to help the White House in the weeks ahead.

Texas legislative session ends in protests, threats

Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas — Hundreds of protesters opposing Texas' tough new anti-"sanctuary cities" law launched a raucous demonstration from the public gallery in the Texas House on Monday, briefly halting work and prompting lawmakers on the floor below to scuffle — and even threaten gun violence — as tense divides over hardline immigration policies boiled over.

Activists wearing red T-shirts reading "Lucha," or "Fight," quietly filled hundreds of gallery seats as proceedings began. After about 40 minutes, they began to cheer, drowning out the lawmakers below.

State House leadership stopped the session and asked state troopers to clear the gallery.

After the protest ended, tensions remained high. Rep. Ramon Romero, a Democrat from Fort Worth, said he was standing with fellow Democratic Rep. Cesar Blanco, of El Paso, when Republican colleague Matt Rinaldi came over and

said: "This is BS. That's why I called ICE."

Rinaldi, of Irving in suburban Dallas, and Blanco then began shouting at each other. A scuffle nearly ensued before other lawmakers separated the two.

Later, a group of Democratic lawmakers held a press conference to accuse Rinaldi of threatening to "put a bullet in the head" of someone on the House floor during a second near-scuffle. They said the comment was made in the direction of Democratic Rep. Poncho Nevarez, from the border town of Eagle Pass.

In a subsequent Facebook statement, Rinaldi admitted saying he'd called federal authorities and threatened to shoot Nevarez — but said his life was in danger, not the other way around.

Texas' new law requires police chiefs and sheriffs — under the threat of jail and removal from office — to comply with federal requests to hold criminal suspects for possible deportation.

DHS chief defends bid for Russia back channel

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly is defending an alleged effort by top White House adviser Jared Kushner to create back-channel communications with Russia as a "good thing," while the Trump administration sought to quell mounting questions over secret ties to the Kremlin.

Speaking on Sunday's news shows, Kelly said he didn't know whether the reports by The Associated Press and other news outlets involving Kushner, who is President Donald Trump's son-in-law, were true. But Kelly said such back-channel communications don't bother him and would not be harmful to U.S. security interests.

"It's both normal, in my opinion, and acceptable," Kelly said. "Any way that you can communicate with people, particularly organizations that are maybe not particularly friendly to us, is a good thing."

Rep. Adam Schiff, of California, the top Democrat on the House Intelligence Commit-

tee, said it was "obviously very concerning" if a key Trump campaign figure was possibly seeking secret communications during the transition period with a country that intelligence experts say intervened in the 2016 U.S. presidential election.

The AP and other news organizations reported that Kushner in December proposed a back channel between the Kremlin and the Trump transition team. Kushner spoke with Russian Ambassador Sergey Kislyak about facilitating sensitive discussions to explore the incoming administration's options with Russia as it developed its Syria policy.

The White House did not acknowledge the meeting or Kushner's attendance until March. At the time, a White House official dismissed it as a brief courtesy meeting.

The disclosure of the back channel has put the White House on the defensive. Just back from visiting the Middle East and Europe, Trump on Sunday dismissed recent reports as "fake news."

Panama's Noriega dead at 83

The Washington Post

Gen. Manuel Noriega, the Panamanian strongman and onetime American ally who was toppled from power in a 1989 U.S. invasion and who spent more than two decades imprisoned on drug-dealing and conspiracy convictions, died late Monday. He was most likely 83.

The cause of death was not announced, but Noriega had been in intensive care at a hospital for months after complications from surgery to remove a benign brain tumor.

Panamanian President Juan Carlos Varela announced the death Tuesday morning on Twitter, saying that the passing closes a chapter in the country's history.

A career military man, Noriega led the Panamanian Defense Forces from 1983 until President George H.W. Bush ordered the invasion on Dec. 20, 1989, which followed months of deteriorating relations between Panama and the United States.

Noriega was a polarizing figure for decades after he was led in chains from Panama by U.S. marshals on Jan. 4, 1990, to a federal prison in Miami.

His opponents said Noriega was a brute who killed his opponents and hid millions of

dollars in gains from drug and other corruption payments. Retired Army Gen. and former Secretary of State Colin L. Powell once described Noriega as "pure evil."

Noriega consistently rejected such charges, which he said were trumped up by opponents. He claimed the Bush administration moved against him after he refused to help American policy in Central America intended to overthrow Nicaragua's Sandinista government and halt a civil war in El Salvador.

"Why, after being the man the United States could count on, did I become the enemy?" Noriega asked bitterly in the jailhouse interviews this reporter conducted with him that led to his 1994 memoir, "America's Prisoner." "Because I said no. No to allowing the United States to run a school for dictators (the U.S. military's School of the Americas) any longer in Panamanian territory. No to the request that Panama be used as a staging base for the Salvadoran death squads and the Nicaraguan contras. Lots of no's."

Before his fall from favor, U.S. officials considered Noriega a reliable protector of stability in Panama. As early as his student days in the 1950s, he was an eager informant for the

U.S. intelligence services.

Bush justified the invasion by saying, among other things, that the Panamanian leader had declared war on the United States first, that he had made Panama a haven for drug dealers and that he had endangered open shipping channels through the Panama Canal. Noriega's opponents also charged he had ordered the killing of a prominent political opponent. International monitors, including former President Jimmy Carter, denounced Panamanian elections in the spring of 1989 as fraudulent.

More than 25,000 U.S. troops launched the Dec. 20 invasion, bombarding key Panamanian military installations, destroying the headquarters and killing and injuring people in a poor Panama City neighborhood. Noriega eluded capture before seeking refuge days later at the Vatican Embassy in the Panamanian capital. Soldiers surrounded the diplomatic building and blasted rock music at a deafening volume.

Noriega claimed that the music had not bothered him but that it drove priests inside the compound to distraction. With no chance of escape, he surrendered to U.S. forces on Jan. 3, 1990.

Philippines: Siege part of militant plan

Associated Press

MARAWI, Philippines — The militants who have besieged much of a southern Philippine city over the past week include foreign fighters and local gunmen who want to establish a regional branch of Islamic State, the military said Tuesday.

Soldiers have taken control of about 70 percent of Marawi, where the gunmen have been fending off the army for a week, military chief of staff Gen. Eduardo Ano said. About 100 militants, troops and civilians have been killed.

"They wanted to show the world that there is an ISIS branch here which can inflict the kind of violence that has been seen in Syria and Iraq," Ano told The Associated Press.

The siege in Marawi followed an unsuccessful army raid that attempted to capture militant commander Isnilon Hapilon, who has been designated by ISIS as its leader in the Philippines.

Hapilon escaped and gunmen loyal to him swept through the city of 200,000 people, torching buildings and taking hostages. Ano said the gunmen were prepared to fight because they had been planning to unleash attacks during the holy month of Ramadan to capture the attention of ISIS.

President Rodrigo Duterte declared martial law in the south through mid-July, but lawmakers on Tuesday asked for a public session of Congress to determine whether it is still necessary.

The army insists the drawn-out fight in Marawi is not a true sign of the militants' strength because the military has held back to spare civilian lives.

Ano said Hapilon was still hiding somewhere in the city and that authorities were working to confirm whether another top militant had been killed.

At least 65 militants and 15 Philippine troops have been killed, Ano said. The bodies of 19 civilians have been recovered, and authorities have reported more civilian deaths still to be tallied.

S. Korea calls for probe into THAAD launchers

Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — Calling it a "very shocking" incident, South Korea's new president on Tuesday demanded an investigation into why his office wasn't told by defense officials about the arrival of several additional launchers for a contentious U.S. missile defense system meant to cope with North Korea's nuclear threat.

Before taking office on May 10, Moon Jae-in vowed to review the deployment of a system that has infuriated both North Korea and China, which consider its powerful radar a security threat. Many of Moon's supporters don't want the system, which U.S. President Donald Trump

suggested Seoul should pay for.

On Tuesday, senior presidential adviser Yoon Young-chan said Moon has discovered that four additional launchers for the Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense, or THAAD, system have arrived in South Korea since the original two launchers were installed in April.

Yoon said senior Defense Ministry officials didn't report the arrival of the additional launchers when they gave Moon's policy advisory committee a briefing last Thursday.

"President Moon said it's 'very shocking' after receiving a report" on the incident from his national security director, Yoon said at a news conference.

Moon, a liberal, is now work-

ing with Cabinet members who were appointed by his conservative predecessor, Park Geun-hye, who was ousted from office in March over a corruption scandal. Moon has nominated some of his own Cabinet members, but they haven't formally taken office.

Yonhap news agency cited an unidentified Defense Ministry official as saying the ministry told Moon's national security director about the four launchers the day after the policy briefing. But Yonhap said the presidential Blue House denied that.

Both the Defense Ministry and the Blue House said they couldn't immediately confirm the report.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Woman jumps from bridge after arrest

OK TULSA — The Oklahoma Highway Patrol said a woman was listed in critical condition after she escaped arrest and leaped from an interstate bridge.

Highway Patrol Lt. Kara Phillipi said the incident occurred shortly after midnight Monday after a trooper arrested the unidentified woman on Interstate 44 in Tulsa for allegedly driving under the influence.

The woman was fidgeting in the trooper's vehicle while en route to jail. Phillipi said she was able to unbuckle her safety belt and the trooper stopped to resecure her. The woman bolted from the patrol vehicle when the trooper opened the door, ran across the eastbound lanes of the interstate and jumped from the overpass.

Nude beachgoers are opposed to upgrades

VT WESTMORE — The popularity of a nude beach in Vermont is helping to drive state plans to develop the area to add parking spaces, boardwalks and flush toilets.

Regulars who visit the southwest cove on Lake Willoughby in Westmore, just south of the Canadian border, fear the changes planned by the state will destroy the pristine nature of the beach and the area.

After an outcry, the state is scaling back its plans.

Zoo looking for birds that flew the coop

NC ASHEBORO — Two birds flew the coop at the North Carolina Zoo, and officials are asking the public's help to find them.

The zoo near Asheboro said the secretary birds that es-

caped Friday aren't a danger to the public, pets or farm animals. The zoo said the birds escaped through a door that wasn't tightly closed after 30-mph winds blew it open.

The birds are about 4 feet tall and are light gray with long, dark tail feathers. They eat snakes, rodents, amphibians and large insects.

Racist flyers posted on utility poles, cars

VA ALEXANDRIA — Racist flyers were found on utility poles and car windows in a community near the nation's capital, prompting a police investigation.

Local media outlets reported the flyers with racist messages targeting blacks and immigrants were found in the Alexandria's Del Ray neighborhood. Police say they are investigating who's behind the flyers, which included a web address of a white nationalist group.

Mayor Allison Silberberg said residents "denounce hate speech and hate crimes and discrimination in all forms."

In 4 months, zoo sees 3 animal cancer cases

ID BOISE — Creatures at Zoo Boise get yearly wellness checks and, like with humans, cancer is a particular scourge.

The Idaho Statesman reported that in the past four months the zoo has seen three cancer cases, ending with the deaths of two animals.

Keepers knew something was wrong with Jack, a sloth bear, when he lost his appetite and became jaundiced, indicating renal failure. Zoo director Steve Burns said cancer had riddled the bear's body with tumors. Jack was euthanized on May 13. Cancer was also responsible for the January death of a male

lion, Jabari. A meerkat named Spot had a tumor removed from his liver in early May.

Man charged with firing at cab in Miami Beach

FL MIAMI BEACH — A Georgia man was charged with firing a weapon at an occupied taxi cab in a popular tourist destination in Florida.

Dontavious Johnson was charged with assault with a deadly weapon, shooting a deadly missile, criminal mischief and resisting an officer without violence in connection with Saturday night's shooting on Miami Beach.

A police report said Johnson fired multiple shots into the occupied taxi cab, wounding a passenger who got out of the cab and fled on foot.

Surveillance video caught Johnson chasing another man into a liquor store while pointing the semiautomatic weapon at him. Johnson fled but was captured by police officers.

Woman's reality TV home foreclosed on

MI HOLT — A Michigan woman whose home was rebuilt on a reality TV show is being forced from her home by foreclosure.

Arlene Nickless, of Holt, had to leave her home by Monday, eight months after it fell into foreclosure.

Designers with ABC's "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition" razed her old home and built the new 3,300-square-foot, four-bedroom home in 2008 with the help of hundreds of volunteers following the death of Nickless' husband, Tim.

Nickless said the foreclosure resulted from a struggle to manage the property's pre-makeover mortgage. The mortgage's balance had ballooned to

at least \$113,000 by late 2016.

Man tries to bite plane attendant, jumps out

NC CHARLOTTE — A 22-year-old man jumped out of an airplane waiting to take off in North Carolina and had to be stopped from running onto the runway.

A federal air marshal said in a sworn statement that Tun Sein, 22, was flying from Charlotte to New Bern on Thursday when he stood after the American Airlines flight had pulled away from the gate and was waiting to take off.

Authorities said Sein ignored a flight attendant, then tried to bite her and fought off two passengers. He ran to the door, opened it and jumped out. An airport worker stopped him.

Investigators said Sein spoke little English. He is charged with interference with a flight crew.

Man facing charges after woman run over

MN ST. PAUL — An Oakdale man faces a felony assault charge after allegedly running over a woman with his pickup truck in the parking lot of a Target store in St. Paul.

The St. Paul Pioneer Press reported Christian Smalley, 56, allegedly veered his truck toward a 23-year-old woman as she stepped off the sidewalk May 24. Authorities said the woman was thrown onto the hood of the truck before falling beneath it and being dragged, then run over. She suffered scrapes and bruises.

Police said Smalley told officers the woman jumped in front of his truck, and that he had stopped taking medications for a mental illness.

From wire reports

STARS AND STRIPES

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Penguins find a way to capture Game 1

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — This is what the Pittsburgh Penguins do. They find a way.

Even on nights when they blow a three-goal lead, they go an entire period (and then some) without registering a single shot and the opponent is fresher, quicker and, for long stretches, demonstrably better.

Maybe it's mystique. Maybe it's luck. Maybe it's a bit of both. What makes the defending Stanley Cup champions different from the 29 other clubs chasing them isn't the way they dominate when they play well. It's their ability to survive when they don't.

On nights like Monday in Game 1 of the Stanley Cup Final, when a brief early flurry led to a baffling lull only to end how so many games have ended for the Penguins over the last two springs: with the bigger number on the scoreboard next to their name and the guys on the other bench wondering how Pittsburgh got away. Again.

Rookie Jake Guentzel fired a shot by Nashville's Pekka Rinne with 3:17 left in regula-

tion to put the Penguins ahead to stay in a flat-out weird 5-3 victory.

"None of us in our dressing room is fooled by the score tonight," Pittsburgh coach Mike Sullivan said.

Game 2 is Wednesday night in Pittsburgh.

The Penguins were outshot 26-12 and went 37 minutes

without managing to get one puck on Rinne, the best goalie in the playoffs and the main reason the Predators are on their sport's biggest stage for the first time. And yet it didn't matter.

When Guentzel ended an eight-game goalless drought and Nick Bonino picked up his second goal on an empty-netter, the Penguins were in control as they try to become the first team since Detroit in 1998 to win back-to-back Cups.

"It's not textbook," said Pittsburgh captain Sidney Crosby, who picked up two assists. "We've got some things we need to improve on."

The Penguins will have the luxury of doing it with the lead.

Conor Sheary scored his

first of the playoffs and Evgeni Malkin collected his eighth. The Penguins won despite putting just 12 shots on goal. Matt Murray finished with 23 saves for the Penguins, who used the first coach's challenge in Final history to wipe out an early Nashville goal and held on despite their astonishing shot drought.

"I think at the end of the day we're up 1-0," Bonino said. "We had a good first, we had a terrible second and we were terrible in the third. I don't think it's Xs and Os. We've got to work harder, compete a little harder, but we got some timely goals."

Ryan Ellis, Colton Sissons and Frederick Gaudreau scored for the Predators. Rinne stopped just seven shots.

"It was a different game," Rinne said. "I can't remember facing that kind of game before."

The Penguins had all of three days to get ready for the final following a draining slog through the Eastern Conference that included a pair of Game 7 victories, the second a double-overtime thriller against Ottawa last Thursday.

Pittsburgh looked a step behind at the outset. The Predators, who crashed the NHL's biggest stage for the first time behind Rinne and a group of talented defenseman, were hardly intimidated by the stakes, the crowd or the defending champions.

All the guys from "Smashville" have to show for it is their first deficit of the playoffs on a night a fan threw a catfish onto the ice to try to give the Predators a taste of home.

"I thought our guys played a great game," Nashville coach Peter Laviolette said. "We hate the score. We hate the result but we'll move forward."

Nashville was better from the opening faceoff but Pittsburgh managed to build a quick 3-0 lead anyway thanks to a fortunate bounce and some quick thinking by Penguins video coordinator Andy Saucier. Part of his job title is to alert coach Mike Sullivan when to challenge a call. The moment came 12:47 into the first when P.K. Subban sent a wrist shot by Murray that appeared to give the Predators the lead.

Predators encouraged after dominating long stretches

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — The first period of their first Stanley Cup Final game was a rough one for the Nashville Predators.

They had a goal waved off. They fell behind 3-0 and looked overmatched at times.

And then things settled down. Nashville dominated long stretches of the second and third periods, and even limited the defending Stanley Cup champion Pittsburgh Penguins without a shot for an impressive 37-minute stretch before falling 5-3. Game 2 is Wednesday night.

"I thought we outplayed them, I really did," Predators defenseman P.K. Subban said. "Being down 3-0 to the Stanley Cup champions, coming back

and tying it up with an opportunity to win the hockey game is definitely something to build on."

Ryan Ellis scored in the second period and Colton Sissons in the third, both on the power play, before Frederick Gaudreau tied the game prior to Jake Guentzel's game-winner for Pittsburgh.

Pekka Rinne made seven saves on just 12 shots. He faced eight of those shots in the first period and then saw none in the second period, the first time a team held an opponent without a shot in a Stanley Cup Final since the league began tracking shots on goal in 1958. The next shot he faced was Guentzel's goal with 3:17 to play.

"At the end of the game, I'm disappointed I didn't help my

team," Rinne said. "We showed a lot of character and I felt we played a great game."

Nick Bonino scored twice, including an empty-net goal, while Evgeni Malkin and Conor Sheary scored in the first period for Pittsburgh. Matt Murray made 23 saves.

The Predators were a perfect 3-0 on the road in Game 1 during the playoffs. But they allowed three goals in the first period for just the fourth time this season, and now they trail for the first time in the Stanley Cup playoffs.

Nashville thought it scored the opening goal midway through the first period when Subban's wrist shot from the point got by Murray. But the goal was overturned and ruled offside after the first coach's

challenge in a Final game.

"The impact of that moment and then the chain of events that happened after that with the penalty kills I think changed the course of the game," Predators coach Peter Laviolette said.

Pittsburgh was awarded a 5-on-3 power play for a full two minutes, and the Predators were less than 30 seconds from killing the penalty when Malkin's slap shot from the point beat Rinne. Sheary struck 1:05 after Malkin's goal, converting a wide-open look from the side of the net. And with just 16.1 seconds left in the first, Rinne poked Bonino's centering pass and the deflected puck bounced off Mattias Ekholm and into the goal.

Woods blames painkillers for DUI arrest

The Washington Post

A “sluggish” Tiger Woods was asleep at the wheel of his black Mercedes-Benz and when awakened by police early Monday morning, had no idea where he was, according to court documents concerning his DUI arrest in Jupiter, Fla.

Police discovered Woods buckled into his 2015 car, which was running with the brake lights and right turn signal flashing, on Military Trail south of Indian Creek Parkway. After they awakened him, he had difficulty keeping his eyes open, his speech was slurred and he was unable to stand on his own, according to documents obtained by the Palm Beach Post. Asked if he understood directions to recite the alphabet backward, he said,

“Yes, recite entire national anthem backward.” After the directions were explained several more times, he completed the task.

Woods, in a statement Monday night, blamed the incident on “an unexpected reaction to prescription medications.” The 41-year-old underwent his fourth back surgery in April and was described by police as cooperative. A breathalyzer test registered 0.000 and toxicology results, as well as those from a urine test, were not yet available.

An officer listed the medications Woods said he was taking as “solonex,” “vicodin,” “torix” and “vioxx.” He added that he had not taken the last of these this year. Torix and Vioxx are anti-inflammatory medica-

tions; Vicodin a painkiller.

“I didn’t realize the mix of medications had affected me so strongly,” Woods said in a statement Monday night. “I understand the severity of what I did and I take full responsibility for my actions.”

Woods initially told police he was returning to his Florida home from a golf event in Los Angeles, but changed his story about where he was going and where he had come from, police said. He even asked police how far he was from his home on Jupiter Island and was told that he was going in the wrong direction.

Woods was charged with driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol and cited for improper stopping, standing or parking in an illegal place, ac-

ording to Palm Beach County court records. He was booked at around 7 a.m. Monday and freed on his own recognizance at around 11 a.m. He is scheduled to be arraigned July 5.

“I would like to apologize with all my heart to my family, friends and the fans,” Woods said Monday. “I expect more from myself too. I will do everything in my power to ensure this never happens again.”

Mark Steinberg, Woods’ long-time agent, would not say Monday evening whether the mix of medications Woods cited was related to his back problems. “He wanted to clarify the situation,” Steinberg told The Post’s Barry Svrluga by phone. “But there’s nothing further to provide right now.”

Murray advances to second round of French

Associated Press

PARIS — Top-seeded Andy Murray is safely through to the second round of the French Open after beating Andrey Kuznetsov of Russia 6-4, 4-6, 6-2, 6-0.

Murray, who was runner-up at Roland Garros last year, has been struggling in 2017 and looked uncomfortable at times during the second set.

But the world No. 1 got into his stride and saw out the final set in just 27 minutes, sealing the match with a forehand down the line after winning eight straight games.

“Last year was a great year for me, you know it was the best I ever played,” Murray said. “Here at the beginning of my career I struggled. But each year I kept coming back and was trying a little bit better and last year was really good.”

“And last year during Bercy that’s when I reached No. 1 for first time, so I’ve got very good memories from Paris last year, and I’ll try and have another good one year this year.”

The British player will face Martin Kližan in the second round.

Simona Halep is also through to the second round after beating Jana Cepelova of Slovakia in straight sets.

A recent ankle injury didn’t appear to be troubling the No. 3 seed as Halep raced to a 6-2, 6-3 victory in just 67 minutes.

On a day of upsets on Court Philippe

Chatrier, up-and-coming youngster Alexander Zverev lost to Fernando Verdasco when their first-round match resumed.

The match was suspended Monday because of darkness after the players split the first two sets and the ninth-seeded Zverev was eventually beaten 6-4, 3-6, 6-4, 6-2.

No. 7 seed Johanna Konta of Britain had earlier lost 1-6, 7-6 (2), 6-4 to 109th-ranked Hsieh Su-wei of Taiwan on the showcourt. Considering the setting, the result is not all that surprising: Konta has now lost all three matches she’s played at the French Open in her career.

The 33-year-old Verdasco pinpointed the third set as the turning point of his match.

“It was a really tough first set, the first one of today. And I think with many games for both of us with chances to win one or the other,” the Spaniard said.

“And, you know, I think that that moment of winning the third set gave me a lot of confidence and a lot of air to play the fourth. And I think it was hard for him on the other side. Like, you know, to start again and have to win two more sets.”

Zverev was one of the outside favorites after impressing on his way to victory at the Italian Open earlier this month. But the 20-year-old German grew more frustrated as the match went on and broke his racket during the fourth set.

“You sometimes play bad. It’s just this is our sport,” Zverev said. “There is no re-

grets. I mean, what can you do? In Rome I played fantastic, I won the tournament. Here I played bad, I lost first round. That’s the way it goes.”

Meanwhile, Juan Martin del Potro returned to Roland Garros for the first time in five years and the 2009 U.S. Open champion had little trouble picking up a victory.

After a series of wrist operations kept him off the tour for months at a time, Del Potro once again used his big forehand to great effect. He beat qualifier Guido Pella 6-2, 6-1, 6-4 in an all-Argentine matchup, showing no sign of the shoulder and back problems that hampered him at the Lyon Open last week.

Stan Wawrinka is also safely through to the second round after a 6-2, 7-6 (6), 6-3 win over Jozef Kovalik of Slovakia.

John Isner hit 31 aces and, more surprisingly, converted all three of his break points in a 6-3, 4-6, 7-6 (5), 6-3 victory over Jordan Thompson of Australia.

In all, of the 11 men from the United States who entered the main draw at Roland Garros, only Isner and No. 25 Steve Johnson remain in the tournament. It’s the first time since 2011 that as few as two Americans got to the second round in Paris.

The 21st-seeded Isner saved 6 of 8 break points that he faced Tuesday.

The other seeded American man in action, No. 27 Sam Querrey, lost to Chung Hyeon of South Korea 6-4, 3-6, 6-3, 6-3.

Harper, Strickland brawl during Nats' win

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Drilled in the hip by a heater, Bryce Harper knew where this was headed. In a hurry, too.

"You see red," he said.

Enraged, the Washington slugger charged the mound, wildly fired his helmet and traded punches to the head with reliever Hunter Strickland, setting off a furious brawl Monday during the Nationals' 3-0 win over the San Francisco Giants.

"You never want to get suspended or anything like, but sometimes you just got to go and get them and can't hesitate," Harper said. "You either go to first base or you go after him and I decided to go after him."

The two players have a history, stemming from two home runs Harper hit off Strickland in the 2014 playoffs.

"I can see how that stands in people's minds," Strickland said.

This flashpoint came in their first matchup since then — with two outs in the eighth inning, none on and Washing-

ton ahead 2-0, Strickland hit Harper with the first pitch, a 98 mph fastball.

The four-time All-Star pointed his bat at Strickland, yelled at him and took off.

"My head was on a swivel, as quick as I could to not get taken out by somebody on their team or anything like that," he said.

No one got in Harper's way as he rushed the mound. Giants star catcher Buster Posey stuck near the plate when Harper bolted, and stayed clear of the fracas as things escalated.

"Strick and him are the only ones that can answer why" the fight happened, Posey said.

Harper's eyes were wide as he flung his helmet — it wasn't close to Strickland — and they started swinging away.

The 6-foot-4 Strickland hit Harper in the face, then they broke apart for a moment before squaring off again. Harper punched Strickland in the head as the benches and bullpen emptied.

Harper and Strickland were both ejected, and are certain to face punishment from Major League Baseball.

In the 2014 NL Division Series, Harper hit two home runs off Strickland. Harper watched the second shot sail down the line, in Game 4, and glared at the reliever as he rounded the bases.

"I wasn't sure what was going on, but I think [the Giants] were definitely shocked at the situation, shocked that he would do something like that three years later," Harper said.

"It just wasn't relevant. Like I said, it was three years ago, over a thousand days, I guess," Harper said. "I don't know why he's thinking about it. He's got a World Series ring. It's on his finger and he's able to look at it every single night."

Strickland said he missed his spot.

"I left the ball over the plate a couple of times to him," he said. "He's taken advantage of that, so I went inside. Obviously, I got in a little too far."

"He decided to come out, that's what he decided to do. It's go time. You protect yourself and stand your own ground," he said. "And I'll take what consequences come with it. I was

pretty fired up, to be honest. It's part of the game."

Giants manager Bruce Bochy framed it for everyone.

"It looks bad, it does," he said. "Harper gets hit and you look at a guy who's given up some home runs, and he'll tell you that he was trying to come in. You don't want to make a mistake there. You have two guys who don't care for each other too much. It was a pretty good pile."

Nationals manager Dusty Baker had no doubt about Strickland's intent.

"We were ahead 2-0, two outs and nobody on base. I mean, that's the prime time to hit somebody if you're going to hit them, it looked like it was intentional to me," he said.

"What's a man supposed to do? He's not a punching bag, he's human with emotions. I know he took [Strickland] deep in the playoffs a couple of times and he probably took exception to that. I mean baseball is a game where you don't forget and you can hold grudges for a long, long time."

Astros rally past Twins with 11 runs in eighth inning

Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — Once Carlos Beltran and the Houston Astros began battering away, there was no relief for Minnesota's beleaguered bullpen.

Beltran homered and singled during an 11-run burst in the eighth inning and Houston overwhelmed the Twins 16-8 Monday in a matchup of AL division leaders.

The Astros won their fifth in a row, improving the best record in the majors.

"We have shown that, no matter how far behind in the game we fall, we're going to try to preach good at-bats and I think that's what we did," Beltran said. "We were able to put good at-bats out there and got good results."

Pirates 4, Diamondbacks 3:

Andrew McCutchen hit a lead-off homer in the ninth inning, lifting host Pittsburgh over Arizona in a wild ending.

Indians 5, Athletics 3: Carlos Carrasco won his third straight decision and Edwin Encarnacion hit one of host Cleveland's three solo home runs.

White Sox 5, Red Sox 4: Boston lefty David Price had an uneven season debut while Melky Cabrera homered and drove in four runs, helping host Chicago rally.

Orioles 3, Yankees 2: Dylan Bundy allowed two runs over seven innings in another strong start at Camden Yards as Baltimore beat New York to snap a seven-game losing streak.

Dodgers 5, Cardinals 1: Chase Utley, Cody Bellinger and Logan Forsythe hit solo home runs, leading Rich Hill

and visiting Los Angeles to its fifth straight victory.

Padres 5, Cubs 2: Rookie Hunter Renfroe hit a grand slam off Kyle Hendricks as host San Diego handed Chicago its fourth straight loss.

Mariners 6, Rockies 5: Sam Gaviglio pitched into the sixth inning to get his first career victory, and Seattle used six relievers to beat host Colorado.

Mets 4, Brewers 2: Hours after being ticketed for the bullpen, rookie Robert Gsellman pitched seven innings of three-hit ball and had two RBIs to lead host New York past Milwaukee.

Rays 10, Rangers 8: Tim Beckham hit a go-ahead three-run homer in the seventh as Tampa Bay scored five runs in a span of three pitches to end host Texas' eight-game home

winning streak.

Tigers 10, Royals 7: Miguel Cabrera and J.D. Martinez each drove in three runs as Detroit came from behind to beat host Kansas City.

Blue Jays 17, Reds 2: Troy Tulowitzki hit his fourth career grand slam and Marcus Stroman won his fifth straight decision to help host Toronto rout Cincinnati.

Braves 6, Angels 3: Matt Adams and Danny Santana had two-run doubles during a six-run third inning to help visiting Atlanta overcome Albert Pujols' 598th career homer.

Marlins 4, Phillies 1: Edinson Volquez pitched six innings to earn his first win of the year after seven losses as host Miami forged its first two-game winning streak since April 23.