

Biden to grads: Putin 'NATO-ized' Europe

BY SVETLANA SHKOLNIKOVA
Stars and Stripes

President Joe Biden told U.S. Naval Academy graduates on Friday that the next decade will be decisive for democracy, national security and reshaping the international world order for generations.

Russia's brutal assault on Ukraine has spurred a fight that is dividing the globe in terms of geography and values, Biden said at the academy's graduation and commissioning ceremony.

"We're living through a global struggle between autocracies and democracies," he said.

Biden accused Russian President Vladimir Putin of aiming to conquer Ukraine to wipe out the identity of its people. Attacks on schools, nurseries, hospitals, museums serve no other purpose than to eliminate the Ukrai-

nian culture, he said.

"That's what you're graduating into," Biden said. "A world that more than ever requires strong principles and engaged American leadership, where America leads not only by the example of its power but the power of its example."

The fallout from the war in Ukraine is already changing longstanding defense postures around the world, he said. Putin's attempt to "Finland-ize" Europe into neutrality has backfired, Biden said, driving Finland and Sweden into NATO's arms. The two nations applied to join the military alliance earlier this month after decades of neutrality.

"[Putin] has NATO-ized all of Europe," Biden said.

Fresh off a trip to Asia, the president told graduates that they will be at the forefront of U.S. efforts to counter the rising dominance

of China. The maritime theater in the Indo-Pacific — a region that will be "vital to the future of our world" — will be the "leading edge" of America's response to natural humanitarian disasters, Biden said.

"[We will show] people throughout the region the unmatched ability of the United States to be a force for good," he said.

The Navy will be tasked with strengthening connections with allies and implementing an Indo-Pacific strategy that ensures freedom of navigation of the South China Sea and keeps sea lanes open and secure, Biden said.

"These long-standing basic maritime principles are the bedrock of a global economy and global stability," he said. "Sailors and mariners, submariners and SEALs, Navy aviators and surface warfare officers, we're going to look to you to ensure the security of the American people."

Cavoli touts potential of an expanded NATO alliance

BY SVETLANA SHKOLNIKOVA
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WASHINGTON — The nominee to be the next commander of U.S. and NATO forces in Europe told senators on Thursday that expanding the alliance would change the security landscape in the region to Russia's detriment.

Gen. Christopher Cavoli, the U.S. Army's top general in Europe, said adding Finland and Sweden to NATO would give the military alliance a footprint over almost the entire Baltic Sea coastline and force Russia to reconfigure long-standing troop formations for a buffer against Finland.

Cavoli is poised to succeed Air Force Gen. Tod Wolters as the leader of U.S. European Command and Supreme Allied Commander Europe, pending confirmation by the Senate. Cavoli said Thursday during a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing that he would lead U.S. forces as an example for other NATO members.

"The U.S.'s special role inside NATO is to point the way toward the future and demonstrate with our actions how to go in that direction," he said. "As we arm our own military, we create a model that other nations in the alli-

ance can emulate."

The U.S. is by far the largest defense spender in the alliance, accounting for 51% of NATO's combined Gross Domestic Product and 69% of combined defense expenditure, according to a March report by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg.

Cavoli said he wanted to see each member country exceed NATO's 2% of GDP military spending target. Just eight NATO nations in the 30-member alliance met that threshold in 2021, according to Stoltenberg.

"Two percent is a floor, not a ceiling," the general said.

Finland's defense budget is near that figure, and Sweden is aiming to meet it by 2028. The two countries filed their applications for NATO membership earlier this month as Russia wages war in Ukraine to deter the alliance's expansion.

Cavoli said Finland's military investments, including a pending purchase of 64 F-35 fighter jets, as well as history with Russia, will be a major asset on NATO's eastern flank. Finland shares an 810-mile border with Russia and has cultivated a large, well-equipped and well-trained army that fended off a Soviet invasion during the 1939-40 Winter War.

"The Finns are absolutely expert in defending that border," Cavoli said. "I've personally gone on a snowmobile with the chief of the border guard and the chief of the Finnish army down half the length of that border and I was very impressed with their ability to defend it."

Cavoli told Sen. Tom Cotton, R-Ark., that he disagreed with fears that bringing NATO to Russia's doorstep could expose the alliance to greater risk. He said the risk will be felt on Russia's side.

For years, Moscow's amicable relationship with Helsinki allowed it to maintain light ground forces near the Russia-Finland border and concentrate most troops elsewhere, Cavoli said.

"That possibility will now go away for Russia," he said.

Still, Cavoli cautioned that the U.S. and its NATO allies should emphasize transparency when conducting large-scale exercises to avoid miscommunication with Russia.

"It's a delicate balance because one must not shy away from activity to stay strong... but it's also necessary not to overdo that and create a problem where there wasn't a problem," he said.

Uvalde kids: 'Please send the police'

Associated Press

UVALDE, Texas — Nearly 20 officers stood in a hallway outside of the classrooms during this week's attack on a Texas elementary school for more than 45 minutes before agents used a master key to open a door and confront a gunman, authorities said Friday.

The on-site commander believed the gunman, 18-year-old Salvador Ramos, was barricaded in a classroom at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde during Tuesday's attack and that the children were not at risk, Texas Department of Public Safety Director Steven McCraw said at a news conference.

"He was convinced at the time that there was no more threat to the children and that the subject was barricaded and that they had time to organize" to get into the classroom, McCraw said.

"Of course it was not the right decision. It was the wrong decision," he said.

McCraw said U.S. Border Patrol agents eventually used a master key to open the locked door of the classroom where they confronted and killed Ramos, who killed 19 students and two teachers.

McCraw said there was a barrage of gunfire shortly after Ramos entered the classroom where they killed Ramos but that shots were "sporadic" for much of the 48

minutes while officers waited outside the hallway. He said investigators do not know if or how many children died during those 48 minutes.

Throughout the attack, teachers and children repeatedly called 911 asking for help, including a girl who pleaded: "Please send the police now," McCraw said.

Questions have mounted over the amount of time it took officers to enter the school to confront the gunman.

It was 11:28 a.m. Tuesday when Ramos' Ford pickup slammed into a ditch behind the low-slung Texas school and the driver jumped out carrying an AR-15-style rifle.

Twelve minutes after that, authorities say, the 18-year-old Ramos entered the halls of Robb Elementary School and found his way to a fourth-grade classroom, where he killed 19 students and two teachers in a still-unexplained spasm of violence.

But it wasn't until 12:58 p.m. that law enforcement radio chatter said Ramos had been killed and the siege was over.

What happened in those 90 minutes, in a working-class neighborhood near the edge of the town of Uvalde, has fueled mounting public anger and scrutiny over law enforcement's response to Tuesday's rampage.

"They say they rushed in," said Javier Cazares, whose fourth-grade daughter, Jacklyn Cazares, was killed in the attack,

and who raced to the school as the massacre unfolded. "We didn't see that."

Friday's update on the attack's timeline came only after authorities declined to explain why officers had not been able to stop the shooter sooner, with Victor Escalon, regional director for the Texas Department of Public Safety, telling reporters Thursday that he had "taken all those questions into consideration," but was not ready to answer them.

The Thursday briefing, called by Texas safety officials to clarify the timeline of the attack, provided bits of previously unknown information. But by the time it ended, it had added to the troubling questions surrounding the attack, including about the time it took police to reach the scene and confront the gunman, and the apparent failure to lock a school door he entered.

Michael Dorn, executive director of Safe Havens International, which works to make schools safer, cautioned that it's hard to get a clear understanding of the facts soon after a shooting.

"The information we have a couple of weeks after an event is usually quite different than what we get in the first day or two. And even that is usually quite inaccurate," Dorn said. For catastrophic events, "you're usually eight to 12 months out before you really have a decent picture."

Ship expands Iran Revolutionary Guard's reach

Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard is building a massive new support ship near the strategic Strait of Hormuz as it tries to expand its naval presence in waters vital to international energy supplies and beyond, satellite photos obtained by The Associated Press show.

The construction of the Shahid Mahdavi provides the Guard a large, floating base from which to run the small fast boats that largely make up its fleet designed to counter the

U.S. Navy and other allied forces in the region.

Its arrival, however, comes after a series of setbacks for both the Guard and Iran's regular navy, including the loss of its largest warship less than a year earlier. As negotiations over Iran's nuclear deal with world powers also founder, further confrontations at sea between Tehran and the West also remain a risk.

"They are looking beyond the Persian Gulf and into the blue waters of the Arabian Sea and the Red Sea and the northern Indian Ocean," said Farzin

Nadimi, an associate fellow at the Washington Institute for Near-East Policy who studies the Iranian military.

The Shahid Mahdavi appears to be a retrofit of an Iranian cargo ship known as the Sarvin, based off of previous pictures of the vessel which also has a similar curve to its hull.

The Sarvin arrived off Bandar Abbas in late July last year and then switched off its trackers. By Jan. 29, satellite photos from Planet Labs PBC analyzed by the AP showed the vessel at drydock at Shahid

Darvishi Marine Industries, a company associated with Iran's Defense Ministry just west of Bandar Abbas.

An image of the Shahid Mahdavi circulated first on social media. The ship appears to have crewed anti-aircraft weapons on its bow and stern, according to H.I. Sutton, a military ship expert who first identified the ship as being near Bandar Abbas. A flag for the Revolutionary Guard, showing its logo of a fist gripping an assault rifle with a Quran underneath and a globe behind it, hangs from the ship's bridge.

Key inflation gauge slows down to still-high 6.3%

Associated Press

An inflation gauge closely tracked by the Federal Reserve rose 6.3% in April from a year earlier, just below a four-decade high set in March and the first slowdown since November 2020.

Friday's report from the Commerce Department added to other recent signs showing that while high inflation continues to cause hardships for millions of households, it may finally be moderating, at least for now.

The report also showed that consumer spending rose by a healthy 0.9% from March to April, outpacing the month-to-month inflation rate for a fourth straight time. The ongoing willingness of the nation's consumers to keep spending freely despite inflated prices is helping sustain the economy. Yet all that spending is helping keep prices high and could make the Fed's goal of taming inflation even harder.

On a month-to-month basis, prices rose 0.2% from March to April, down from the 0.9% increase from February to March.

Still, inflation remains painfully high, and it's inflicting a heavy burden in particular on lower-income households, many of them Black or Hispanic. Surging demand for furniture, appliances and other goods, combined with supply chain snarls, began send-

ing prices surging about a year ago. Consumers are now increasingly shifting their spending from goods to services, like airline fares and entertainment tickets. That trend could help cool inflation in the months ahead, though it's unclear by how much. The cost of such services as restaurant meals, plane tickets and hotel rooms is also rising.

Chair Jerome Powell has pledged to keep ratcheting up the Fed's key short-term interest rate until inflation is "coming down in a clear and convincing way." Those rate hikes have spurred fears that the Fed, in its drive to slow borrowing and spending, may push the economy into a recession. That concern has caused sharp drops in stock prices in the past two months, though markets have rallied this week.

Powell has said the Fed is aiming for a "soft or soft-ish" landing, in which wages, consumer spending and growth slow, but the economy avoids a downturn. Most economists say that while such an outcome is plausible, they doubt it can be achieved.

A better-known inflation gauge, the consumer price index, earlier this month also reported a slowing of still-high inflation. The CPI jumped 8.3% in April from a year earlier, down from a 40-year high in March of 8.5%.

Baptist group makes accused abuser list public

Associated Press

In response to an explosive investigation, top Southern Baptists have released a previously secret list of hundreds of pastors and other church-affiliated personnel accused of sexual abuse.

The 205-page database was made public late Thursday. It includes more than 700 entries from cases that largely span from 2000 to 2019. Its existence became widely known Sunday when the independent firm Guidepost Solutions included it in its bombshell report detailing how the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee mishandled allegations of sex abuse, stonewalled numerous survivors and prioritized protecting the SBC from liability.

Executive Committee leaders Rolland Slade and Willie McLaurin, in a joint statement, called publishing the list "an initial, but important, step towards addressing the scourge of sexual abuse and implementing reform in the Convention."

"Each entry in this list reminds us of the devastation and destruction brought about by sexual abuse," they said. "Our prayer is that the survivors of these heinous acts find hope and healing, and that churches will utilize this list proactively to protect and care for the most vulnerable among us."

The Guidepost report, released after a seven-month investigation, contained several explosive revelations. Among them: D. August Boto, the committee's former vice president and general counsel, and former SBC spokesman Roger Oldham kept their own private list of abusive ministers. Both retired in 2019. The existence of the list was not known within the committee.

"Despite collecting these reports for more than 10 years, there is no indication that (Oldham and Boto) or anyone else, took any action to ensure that the accused ministers were no longer in positions of power at SBC churches," the report said.

The Executive Committee did not make additions to the published list, but their attorneys did redact several entries as well as the names and identifying information of survivors, Thursday's joint statement said.

They made public "entries that reference an admission, confession, guilty plea, conviction, judgment, sentencing, or inclusion on a sex offender registry," and expect some of the redacted entries on the list to be made public once more research is done.

Trump loses appeal, must testify under oath in NY civil probe

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Former President Donald Trump must answer questions under oath in the New York attorney general's civil investigation into his business practices, a state appeals court ruled Thursday, rejecting his argument that he be excused from testifying because his answers could be used in a parallel criminal probe.

A four-judge panel in the appellate division of the state's trial court upheld Judge Arthur Engoron's Feb. 17 ruling, which enforced subpoenas requiring that Trump and his two eldest children — Ivanka and Donald Jr. — give deposition testimony in Attorney General Letitia James' probe.

"The existence of a criminal investigation does not preclude civil discovery of related facts, at which a party may exercise the

privilege against self-incrimination," the appellate panel wrote, citing the Fifth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and other legal protections for witnesses.

Lawyers for the Trumps agreed in March that they would sit for depositions within 14 days of an appellate panel decision upholding Engoron's ruling. They could also appeal the decision to the state's highest court, the Court of Appeals, delaying the matter and the Trumps' potential testimony indefinitely.

A message seeking comment was left with lawyers for the Trumps.

James lauded the ruling, which came just two weeks after the appellate panel heard oral arguments in the case. She tweeted that her investigation "will continue undeterred because no one is above the law."

Russia squeezes Ukrainian cities in east

Associated Press

KRAMATORSK, Ukraine — Russia-backed separatists claimed they captured a railway hub city in eastern Ukraine as Moscow's forces pushed to gain more ground Friday by pounding another Ukrainian-held area where authorities say 1,500 people have died since the war's start.

With Russia's offensive in Ukraine's industrial Donbas region showing incremental progress, Ukrainian officials characterized the battle as grave and renewed their appeals for more sophisticated Western-supplied weaponry. Without that, the foreign minister warned, Ukrainian forces won't be able to stop Russia's advance on the east.

Some European leaders sought dialogue with Russian President Vladimir Putin toward ending a war — now in its 93rd day — with global economic repercussions, while Britain's foreign minister worked to rally the West's continued support for Ukraine.

"There should be no talk of cease-fires, or appeasing Putin. We need to make sure that Ukraine wins. And that Russia withdraws

and that we never see this type of Russian aggression again," U.K. Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said.

But in Ukraine's east, Russia does have the upper hand. The fighting Friday focused on two key cities: Sievierodonetsk and nearby Lysychansk.

They are the last areas under Ukrainian control in Luhansk, one of two provinces that make up the Donbas and where Moscow-backed separatists have controlled some territory for eight years.

"There are battles on the outskirts of the city. Massive artillery shelling does not stop, day and night," Sievierodonetsk Mayor Oleksandr Striuk told The Associated Press. "The city is being systematically destroyed — 90% of the buildings in the city are damaged."

An assault was underway in the city's northeastern quarter, where Russian reconnaissance and sabotage groups tried to capture the Mir Hotel and the area around it Friday, Striuk said.

At least 1,500 people have been killed in

Sieverodonetsk since Russia invaded Ukraine on Feb. 24, he said.

The figure includes people killed by shelling or in fires caused by Russian missile strikes, as well as those who died from shrapnel wounds, untreated diseases, a lack of medicine or while trapped under rubble, according to the mayor.

About 12,000 to 13,000 people remain in the city — down from a pre-war population of about 100,000, he said. Those remaining are huddled in shelters, largely cut off from the rest of Ukraine.

In Donetsk, the other Donbas province, the Russia-backed rebels said Friday they took over Lyman, a large railway hub north of two more key cities still under Ukrainian control.

"We lost Lyman," Ukrainian presidential adviser Oleksiy Arestovich acknowledged Thursday night. However, a Ukrainian Defense Ministry spokesperson reported Friday that its soldiers countered Russian attempts to push them completely out of the city.

Spacey to face 4 sex assault charges

Associated Press

LONDON — British prosecutors said Thursday they had authorized police to charge actor Kevin Spacey with four counts of sexual assault against three men, an announcement that came as the actor was in court in New York testifying in a different case.

The Crown Prosecution Service said it had "authorized

criminal charges" on the four sex assault counts and one of "causing a person to engage in penetrative sexual activity without consent."

The alleged incidents took place in London between March 2005 and August 2008, and one in western England in April 2013. The alleged victims are now in their 30s and 40s.

Prosecutors initially said

Spacey had been charged. However, they later clarified that charges had been authorized, but the formal charging by police had not yet taken place.

The authorization to charge means criminal proceedings against Spacey are underway. The police force said Spacey — who is not currently in Britain — "will be formally charged at a later date."

If Spacey does not return to Britain to face the charges, prosecutors could seek to start extradition proceedings.

Spacey, 62, a double Academy Award winner, was questioned by British police in 2019 about claims by several men that he had assaulted them. The former "House of Cards" star ran London's Old Vic Theatre between 2004 and 2015.

329 years later, last Salem 'witch' pardoned

Associated Press

BOSTON — It took more than three centuries, but the last Salem "witch" who wasn't has been officially pardoned.

Massachusetts lawmakers on Thursday formally exonerated Elizabeth Johnson Jr., clearing her name 329 years after she was convicted of witchcraft in 1693 and sentenced to death at the height of the Salem Witch

Trials.

Johnson was never executed, but neither was she officially pardoned, like others wrongly accused of witchcraft.

Lawmakers agreed to reconsider her case last year after a curious eighth grade civics class at North Andover Middle School took up her cause and researched the legislative steps needed to clear her name.

Subsequent legislation introduced by state Sen. Diana DiZoglio, a Democrat from Methuen, was tacked onto a budget bill and approved.

"We will never be able to change what happened to victims like Elizabeth but at the very least, we can set the record straight," DiZoglio said.

Johnson is the last accused witch to be cleared, according to

Witches of Massachusetts Bay, a group devoted to the history and lore of the infamous 17th-century witch hunts.

"Elizabeth's story and struggle continue to greatly resonate today," DiZoglio said. "While we've come a long way since the horrors of the witch trials, women today still all too often find their rights challenged and their concerns dismissed."

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Escaped bison caught after 8 months in wild

IL WAUCONDA — A bison that escaped a suburban Chicago farm last September and had been living in the wild since then was recaptured, officials said.

The 1,300-pound bison that some had come to know as Tyson ran off while being delivered to the Milk and Honey Farmstead in Wauconda, and officials said they believe she settled in Lakewood Forest Preserve in early April.

Forest preserve officials brought in Loose Cattle Caught to help with her capture, and she was found and tranquilized enough to slow her down, officials said.

She walked to a barn for food and Loose Cattle Caught owner Matt Noble was able to close the door behind her, officials said. He then backed up his trailer to the barn and was able to take her back to his compound.

The bison is healthy and under observation. Loose Cattle Caught is working to contact her owner.

500K fentanyl pills seized in traffic stop

AZ CASA GRANDE — Two women were arrested after about 500,000 fentanyl pills were found in an SUV pulled over for speeding on I-10 in Arizona, police said.

The pills that were seized were discovered concealed in collagen supplement bottles during a search that also turned up a handgun and a large amount of cash, police from the small city of Casa Grande, south of Phoenix, said in a statement.

Martha Lopez, 31, and Tania Luna Solis, 30, were arrested on suspicion of crimes including possession of a narcotic drug for sale, according to police.

Fake Army general scammed many women

RI PROVIDENCE — A Texas man has been arrested for what authorities say was his role in an online romance scam in which women were cheated out of a total of nearly \$1 million by someone pretending to be an Army general, federal prosecutors in Rhode Island said.

Fola Alabi, also known as Fodayemi Alabi, 51, was arrested at his Richmond, Texas, home and charged with wire fraud, mail fraud and money laundering, according to a statement from U.S. Attorney Zachary Cunha.

Alabi — or an alleged accomplice pretending to be a general stationed overseas — befriended women on social media on various dates last year, gradually gaining their trust by feigning romantic or personal interest, prosecutors said.

The women were asked to send money to the fake general to help ship his belongings back to the U.S., according to court documents.

Puppy to survive despite arrow through the neck

CA THOUSAND PALMS — A chihuahua puppy found shot through the neck with an arrow in Southern California was expected to survive after veterinarians removed the projectile, authorities said.

A woman reported to 911 that she found the wounded dog in a

neighborhood near the city of Desert Hot Springs after hearing the puppy “screaming,” Riverside County Animal Services said in a statement.

A sheriff’s deputy took the 4-month-old female to an animal services officer who brought the pup to the Coachella Valley Animal Campus.

Veterinary staff determined that the arrow did not strike the puppy’s vital arteries and it was removed.

‘How to Murder Your Husband’ writer is guilty

OR PORTLAND — A jury in Portland has convicted a self-published romance novelist — who once wrote an essay titled “How to Murder Your Husband” — of fatally shooting her husband four years ago.

The jury of seven women and five men found Nancy Crampton Brophy, 71, guilty of second-degree murder after deliberating over two days in chef Daniel Brophy’s death, KOIN-TV reported.

Brophy, 63, was killed June 2, 2018, as he prepped for work at the Oregon Culinary Institute in Southwest Portland.

Lisa Maxfield, one of Crampton Brophy’s attorneys, said the defense team plans to appeal.

Prosecutors told jurors that Crampton Brophy was motivated by money problems and a life insurance policy.

Abortion rights graffiti found on rural church

MS COLUMBUS — Authorities in a rural Mississippi county are perplexed after finding a tiny, isolated church vandalized with

abortion rights slogans.

“It’s mystifying, you know?” said St. Elmore Armistad, a deacon at Mt. Avery Missionary Baptist Church in southeastern Lowndes County.

The graffiti included “Keep your laws off my body” and “Girls just want to have fundamental human rights.”

They don’t have anything to do with the church, where about five people regularly attend services, Armistad told The Commercial Dispatch.

“We don’t preach abortion,” he said. “We preach Jesus Christ. It just don’t add up.”

Guns seized from man allegedly cyberstalking

CA SAN JOSE — Police seized an arsenal of guns and ammunition from a Northern California man charged with cyberstalking his former co-workers after being fired from his job, it was announced.

Bryan Velasquez, 43, of Morgan Hill, was charged with felony stalking and was released on \$50,000 bail. He could face further charges involving illegal weapons, authorities said.

Velasquez was fired from a construction company in January. In April, the company called police to say that he had been “engaging in stalking behavior,” a police statement said.

The behavior escalated, police said, and included posting online photos of himself pointing guns and sending threatening, profanity-laced emails to his former supervisors and co-workers.

-From Associated Press

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Warriors top Mavs, advance to NBA Finals

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Klay Thompson drained the three-pointers. Draymond Green anchored the defense and even chipped in on the offensive end for a change. Stephen Curry capped off an MVP performance.

The trio that led Golden State to so much success in recent years is whole again and has the Warriors in position for another title after advancing to the NBA Finals with a 120-110 victory over the Dallas Mavericks on Thursday night.

“Like I’ve said over and over again, I’m going to keep saying it: No one has proven that they can move us off that spot,” Green said. “That’s the mindset we come into this thing with. We understand what it takes to win a championship.”

The triumvirate of Curry, Thompson and Green is in rarified air in NBA lore as the core of a team that has made it to six NBA Finals in an eight-year span. It’s an accomplishment only the greatest groups have reached with Bill Russell’s Cel-

tics of the 1950s and ’60s, Magic Johnson’s Lakers in the 1980s and Michael Jordan’s Bulls of the 1990s doing it.

Now the Warriors hope to add a fourth title to the ones they captured in 2015, ’17 and ’18 when the Finals start June 2 against Boston or Miami. The Celtics lead the series 3-2 headed into Game 6 at home on Friday night.

“We’re happy to be here, but it would help our legacy a lot if we completed the mission and won the whole thing,” Thompson said. “We can be happy tonight, and we will be, I’ll celebrate tonight. But tomorrow when this Game 6 comes on, I’m turning the page and I’m scouting because we want to finish this thing off the right way.”

The last time the Warriors made it to the Finals they fell short, starting a two-year spiral filled with losing and injuries. Thompson tore his left ACL during a season-ending Game 6 loss in the 2019 NBA Finals.

Kevin Durant tore his Achilles’ tendon earlier that se-

ries and then left for Brooklyn that summer, leading to the Warriors finishing an NBA-worst 15-50 in the pandemic shortened 2019-20 season.

Thompson tore his right Achilles’ tendon just before the start of the next season and the Warriors were unable to make the playoffs, getting knocked out by Memphis in the play-in game.

But Thompson returned in January and the combination of the aging trio of stars with an infusion of youth from players like Andrew Wiggins, Jordan Poole and others has Golden State back at the top of the league again.

“We never lost the faith, but you understand how hard of a process it was going to be to climb the mountain again,” Curry said. “I think internally we are all extremely proud of what it took to get back here. Yeah, it’s definitely sweet based on what we went through.”

Thompson led the way in the clinching Game 5 win of the Western Conference finals over Dallas, making eight three-

pointers for a record-setting fifth time in his playoff career and scoring 32 points.

Green added 17 points, six rebounds and nine assists to go along with his usual defensive brilliance and Curry had 15 points and nine assists as he was named series MVP.

It’s a level of play that reminds coach Steve Kerr of the Bulls teams he played on with Jordan and Scottie Pippen that won so many titles in the 1990s.

“The common denominator is just talented players who are fierce competitors,” Kerr said. “Whether you talk about Michael and Scottie, Steph, Draymond, Klay, it takes a special kind of athlete to have both dynamics. The skill and the athleticism and all that, but to also be just incredibly competitive and to want to win so badly. It’s the only way you can have a run like that because you get exhausted, you get tired, you get frustrated. If you don’t have that type of competitive desire and that type of skill combined, it’s just not going to happen six times out of eight years.”

Nadal, Djokovic advance to 4th round of French Open

Associated Press

PARIS — The big favorites in the men’s draw, defending champion Novak Djokovic and Rafael Nadal, advanced to the fourth round of the French Open on Friday at Roland Garros.

Nadal, seeded fifth, advanced with a victory over the Netherlands’ Botic van de Zandschulp 6-3, 6-2, 6-4.

The 13-time champion from Spain said it was the best of his three wins this week, at least up until Van de Zandschulp crept back into the third set. Nadal in his on-court interview said he was disappointed to miss a break point that would have put him up 5-0.

Nadal’s 301st victory in Grand

Slam events means he will next face ninth-seeded Felix Auger-Aliassime for a spot in the quarterfinals. The Canadian advanced by beating Filip Krajinovic 7-6 (3), 7-6 (2), 7-5.

Djokovic also recorded a straight-sets victory and will face Diego Schwartzman for a spot in the quarterfinals.

The top-ranked Djokovic beat Aljaz Bedene of Slovenia 6-3, 6-3, 6-2 in 1 hour, 44 minutes — the quickest of his three wins. The 20-time Grand Slam champion from Croatia hasn’t lost in the third round at Roland Garros since 2009.

Schwartzman’s 0-6 record against Djokovic includes a five-setter in the third round at the 2017 French Open. The Ar-

gentine is seeded 15th.

On the women’s side, former U.S. Open champion Sloane Stephens beat French teenager Diane Parry 6-2, 6-3 to reach the fourth round. The American was the runner-up in 2018 after having won the title at Flushing Meadows the year before.

Stephens will play No. 23 Jil Teichmann, who advanced by defeating two-time Grand Slam champion Victoria Azarenka 4-6, 7-5, 7-6 (5).

Teichmann amassed 53 winners and 58 unforced errors against the 15th-seeded Azarenka.

Aliaksandra Sasnovich eliminated a Grand Slam champion for the second consecutive match to reach the fourth round.

The 47th-ranked Belarusian beat three-time major champion Angelique Kerber 6-4, 7-6 (5).

Sasnovich had defeated reigning U.S. Open champion Emma Raducanu in the second round.

She next faces Italian player Martina Trevisan, whose best result in a Grand Slam was the quarterfinals at Roland Garros two years ago.

American teenager Coco Gauff advanced to the fourth round with a victory over Kaia Kanepi.

Gauff, 18, the youngest remaining woman in the draw, defeated the 36-year-old Kanepi, the oldest remaining woman, 6-3, 6-4.

Hurricanes push Rangers to brink

Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — The Carolina Hurricanes controlled long stretches of play, stayed aggressive and even got a breakthrough in a two-month struggle on the power play.

It was enough to secure another home playoff victory. Now they can turn their attention to trying to put away the New York Rangers, too.

Vincent Trocheck buried a short-handed goal, Teuvo Teravainen had a rare power-play score and the Hurricanes beat the Rangers 3-1 on Thursday night to take a 3-2 lead in the second-round series.

It was part of yet another strong home performance for the Metropolitan Division champions, who improved to 7-0 at home in the postseason.

“It was kind of the game that I’ve been waiting for,” Carolina coach Rod Brind’Amour said. “We’ve been playing OK, but tonight was good all the way around — more obviously how we want to play.”

Andrei Svechnikov also scored, beating Igor Shesterkin

with a backhander on a breakaway midway through the third period as the Hurricanes protected their Game 5 lead.

The Hurricanes can advance to the Eastern Conference finals to face reigning two-time Stanley Cup champion Tampa Bay by winning Game 6 in New York on Saturday, although they are 0-5 away from PNC Arena so far despite tying for the NHL lead in regular-season road wins.

Now Carolina faces the challenge of putting away a team that has been resilient, even stubborn, when facing a series deficit. The Rangers rallied from a 3-1 hole to beat Pittsburgh in a seven-game first-round series, then lost the first two games against Carolina before fighting back to even at home.

“The way I look at it, we’ve played a lot of must-win games lately, and we’ve done a pretty good job,” said New York’s Ryan Strome, who had a second-period goal negated by a successful offside challenge from Carolina.

“We’ve played some desperate hockey. ... We seem to like being in this position a little bit.”

The Hurricanes sustained their aggressive style while giving the Rangers little room to operate, finishing with a 34-17 shot advantage to keep the pressure on Shesterkin while also easing the burden on Antti Raanta (16 saves) in Carolina’s net.

Mika Zibanejad scored a power-play goal for New York, winning a first-period faceoff and then drifting to the left side for the putaway just six seconds into the man advantage. Shesterkin — a finalist for both the Vezina Trophy for the league’s top goalie and Hart Trophy for most valuable player — finished with 31 saves against a steady stream of work.

Power play

Carolina had been just 9-for-89 (10.1%) on the power play since late March. Yet after an 0-for-9 start in the series, the Hurricanes finally broke

through with quick and crisp puck movement.

Rookie Seth Jarvis — who left briefly in the second with a bleeding mouth after being hit by Strome’s follow-through on a shot — zipped the puck to Teravainen for the left-side putaway to beat Shesterkin at 9:47 of the second for the 2-1 lead. It marked Carolina’s first goal with the man advantage since the final minutes of Game 6 in the first-round win against Boston.

“We had just kind of talked after the last game,” Teravainen said. “Just reset and start over and just we don’t have to think too much (of what’s) behind, keep thinking what’s going forward.”

Negated

Strome appeared to have given the Rangers a 2-1 lead just five minutes into the second when he collected his own entry pass on the boards and beat Antti Raanta. But on the review, linemate Andrew Copp was clearly across the blue line as he tried to tag back up.

McDavid’s overtime goal wins series for Oilers

Associated Press

CALGARY, Alberta — Connor McDavid and Leon Draisaitl dominated the first playoff Battle of Alberta in 31 years.

It was fitting Edmonton’s dynamic duo combined to end it.

McDavid scored at 5:03 of overtime and the Oilers defeated the Calgary Flames 5-4 on Thursday night in Game 5 of the second-round playoff series and advanced to the Western Conference finals.

The Edmonton captain scored his seventh goal of the postseason, beating Jacob Markstrom off a pass from Draisaitl to send the Oilers spilling over the bench in celebration.

McDavid said. “The guys did a great job of hanging in there all night. Definitely wasn’t our best effort, but we stuck in there. Got great performances from a bunch of different guys.”

“Just happy to contribute on a night where I maybe didn’t have my best.”

Zach Hyman had a goal and two assists and Darnell Nurse, Jesse Puljujarvi and Evan Bouchard also scored for the Oilers. Mike Smith made 32 saves.

Draisaitl added four assists — his fifth straight contest registering three-plus points to

build on the NHL playoff record he set in Game 4.

“He’s everything to us,” said Draisaitl, who is dealing with what’s believed to be a lower-body injury suffered late in the opening round. “He’s our leader, he’s our go-to guy, he’s the guy that everyone looks up to when you need him. He’s done it all season, he’s done it all his career. He’s been amazing for us. Eventually you run out of words.”

McDavid and Draisaitl have both amassed 26 points to lead the playoffs so far.

“I just tried to get my legs going,” McDavid said of the winner. “They weren’t moving all that well all night — just

trying to focus on skating and got in on the forecheck and got the puck to Leo.

“Usually when the puck goes to Leo something good’s gonna happen.”

The Oilers will face either the Colorado Avalanche or St. Louis Blues in their first conference finals appearance since 2006. Colorado leads that series 3-2.

Mikael Backlund had a goal and an assist and Johnny Gaudreau, Calle Jarnkrok and Andrew Mangiapane also scored for Calgary. Blake Coleman added two assists and Markstrom made 30 saves as the Flames dropped to 0-10 when trailing a playoff series 3-1.

Guerrero, Jays outduel Ohtani, Angels

Associated Press

ANAHEIM, Calif. — After Vladimir Guerrero Jr. pulled Shohei Ohtani's high curveball down the left-field line, the Toronto slugger stuck an index finger in the air.

That's one career homer off Ohtani by his top rival for last season's AL MVP award. A few innings later, Guerrero's Blue Jays also had their first win over the Angels' two-way star.

George Springer also hit a leadoff home run in Toronto's 6-3 victory over Los Angeles on Thursday night.

Ohtani (3-3) struck out 10 while yielding five runs over six innings despite pitching with back pain from the first inning onward. He fell behind 5-2 in the sixth on a drive off the left-field pole by Guerrero, who finished right behind the Angels' two-way star in the 2021 AL MVP voting.

Guerrero didn't speak to the media afterward, but his fellow Blue Jays knew the moment was exciting for the young slugger.

"I think it means (something to) anybody who faces Ohtani," Toronto manager Charlie Montoyo said. "He's one of the best players in baseball. Anytime you can do something like that, it's fun. It has to mean something."

Hyun Jin Ryu (2-0) gave up six hits and two runs in five innings for Toronto before leaving with tightness in his elbow.

Reds 20, Cubs 5: Kyle Farmer homered twice and tied his career high with five RBIs as host Cincinnati had its highest-scoring game in 23 years.

Hunter Greene (2-6) won for the first time since his major league debut on April 10 despite giving up five runs, seven hits and two walks in five innings.

Yankees 7, Rays 2: Nelson Cortes took a three-hit shutout into the ninth inning, Matt Carpenter sparked a go-ahead, three-run rally in his Yankees debut and New York won at Tampa Bay.

Cortes (4-1) won his third consecutive start, striking out five and walking one in eight-plus innings.

Phillies 4, Braves 1: Aaron Nola (2-4) struck out 10 and took a shutout into the ninth for his first win since opening day, leading Philadelphia over host Atlanta.

J.T. Realmuto homered as the Phillies prevented the World Series champion Braves from posting their first three-game winning streak of the season.

Dodgers 14, Diamondbacks 1: Freddie Freeman highlight-

ed a five-RBI, four-hit night with a three-run homer for his first long ball in more than a month as Los Angeles beat host Arizona.

The Dodgers had 24 hits, their most since getting 24 against the San Francisco Giants on Sept. 13, 2014. Every player in the starting lineup had at least two hits.

Red Sox 16, White Sox 7: Trevor Story had a three-run homer and four RBIs, and Boston took two of three games at Chicago.

Alex Verdugo (three RBIs) had two doubles among four hits for Boston, which outscored Chicago 33-13 in the series. J.D. Martinez went 3-for-5 with a walk to raise his major league-best batting average to .380.

Rangers 4, Athletics 1: Adolis García doubled in pinch-runner Eli White in the top of the ninth inning, Nathaniel Lowe followed with a two-run homer, and Texas defeated host Oakland.

García and Kole Calhoun each had two hits as the Rangers won their second straight after dropping three in a row on their 10-game road trip. Texas also scored a run on a bases-loaded walk by Andy Ibañez.

Tigers 4, Guardians 3: Miguel Cabrera's third hit of the

game was a game-ending single in the ninth for host Detroit.

Cleveland ended Tarik Skubal's 21-inning scoreless streak, the longest by a starting pitcher this year.

Brewers 4, Cardinals 3: Josh Hader escaped a ninth-inning jam in his 37th straight scoreless appearance and visiting Milwaukee held off St. Louis for its third straight victory.

Paul Goldschmidt homered and extended his hitting streak to 17 games for the Cardinals.

Royals 3, Twins 2: Whit Merrifield drove in two runs with a double and scored on Bobby Witt Jr.'s double as Kansas City rallied for three runs in the eighth inning to win at Minnesota.

Josh Staumont (2-1) worked a scoreless inning and picked up the win. Scott Barlow earned his fifth save as the Royals snapped a seven-game losing streak.

Nationals 7, Rockies 3: Patrick Corbin ended a 10-start winless streak, allowing three runs in 6⅓ innings to lead Washington over visiting Colorado.

Corbin (1-7) had not won since last Sept. 23 at Cincinnati in his next-to-last start of the season. He gave up seven hits, struck out three and walked two, lowering his ERA from 6.60 to 6.30.

MLB teams criticized over quality of women's facilities

Associated Press

Major League Baseball told its clubs that some are failing to provide acceptable work accommodations for female employees, calling them "embarrassingly below" standard.

The May 20 memo from Michael Hill, MLB's senior vice president for on-field operations, asks teams to provide documentation by June 3 of the facilities for female coaches and staff. Hill told teams to comply with MLB regulations "as soon as possible."

San Francisco Giants assistant Alyssa Nakken this year became the first woman hired as an on-field coach of a major league team.

Kim Ng became the first female general manager ahead of the 2021 season when she was hired by the Miami Marlins. Several other women are part of high-level baseball operations staff and use areas in and around clubhouses.

"We have required that each club provide both home and visit-

ing female staff that requires access to a locker room with a clean space that: (i) is in close proximity to the respective home or visiting clubhouse; (ii) is private; and (iii) includes appropriate restroom and shower facilities," Hill wrote. "Over the first six weeks of the season, it has become clear that a number of clubs are not in compliance with these requirements, particularly with respect to hosting women on visiting teams.

"It is unacceptable that women who are traveling as part of the

visiting team are not afforded accommodations that permit them to do their jobs at the same level as their male colleagues and counterparts. Many clubs' female facilities fall embarrassingly below the high standards befitting a member of a visiting traveling party of a major league organization. They also create an untenable working environment for women, some of whom are now choosing to not travel to certain cities with their club on the road," he wrote.