

Trump arrives in China for trade talks

Bloomberg News

President Donald Trump arrived in Beijing for the first state visit to China by a U.S. leader in nine years, as the world's two largest economies look to stabilize ties with a summit playing out against the backdrop of the Iran war.

Air Force One touched down at the Beijing Capital International Airport slightly before 8 p.m. on Wednesday, where Chinese Vice President Han Zheng, a military honor guard, and hundreds of flag-waving children readied a red-carpet greeting ceremony for the U.S. president.

The real action kicks off in the morning, with Trump meeting Chinese President Xi Jinping at the Great Hall of the People.

His host enters the summit emboldened, after the pair's meeting last year in South Korea saw Beijing use its rare earths reserves to pressure Trump to roll back threatened tariffs. Since then, the U.S. Supreme

Court has restricted the president's avenues for imposing additional levies, while the Iran war has sapped Trump's domestic political standing.

"Xi is coming into the summit feeling confident he has solved Trump," said Jeremy Chan, a senior analyst at Eurasia Group and a former U.S. diplomat, citing China's critical minerals advantage. The November midterm elections, in which higher fuel prices threaten Republican control of Congress, also mean the U.S. leader is chasing voter-friendly wins on agricultural purchases.

"Trump needs more from this summit than Xi does," Chan added. "And Xi knows it."

But Trump and other administration officials indicated ahead of his arrival that he still intended to use the meeting as a chance to push the Chinese leader on uncomfortable topics, from Beijing's role in the unresolved Middle East conflict to

rolling back trade barriers for U.S. businesses.

"I will be asking President Xi, a Leader of extraordinary distinction, to 'open up' China so that these brilliant people can work their magic, and help bring the People's Republic to an even higher level!" Trump said in a social media post detailing corporate executives accompanying him on the trip. "In fact, I promise, that when we are together, which will be in a matter of hours, I will make that my very first request."

The 36-hour summit — which includes a state banquet, a visit to the Temple of Heaven, and a tea chat in the Zhongnanhai leadership compound — was delayed for weeks as Trump has struggled to bring the Iran conflict to a conclusion.

In recent days, Trump has expressed frustration with Tehran's proposals to wind down its nuclear program as part of a peace deal, suggesting Iran had

failed to offer significant enough concessions and that a fragile ceasefire agreement currently in place could end.

Before departing for the trip, the U.S. leader sought to downplay the Iran war on the summit agenda, saying he would prioritize trade negotiations with Xi instead.

But China buys most of Iran's oil exports, providing the Islamic Republic with a critical economic lifeline to sustain its war efforts, and holds unique geopolitical sway that Trump could be eager to leverage. The conflict has added fresh strains on U.S.-China ties, with the Trump administration recently sanctioning multiple Chinese firms for purchasing Iranian oil or providing satellite imagery to the Islamic Republic.

Revenue that China provides to Iran as well as potential weapons exports are expected to be among the topics of discussion, according to U.S. officials.

Lawmakers seek details as cost for Iran war at \$29B

By Svetlana Shkolnikova

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The cost of the Iran war has climbed to \$29 billion, rising by \$4 billion in two weeks as the conflict stretched into a third month, and lawmakers pressed Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth to send a supplemental funding request to Congress as soon as possible.

The Pentagon comptroller, Jay Hurst, provided the updated figure, factoring in new equipment and operational costs, during back-to-back testimony to the House and Senate defense appropriations subcommittees on Tuesday but cautioned that the estimate was not exhaustive.

It does not include damage sustained by U.S. military bases in the Middle East as they came under retaliatory attack by Iran.

That calculation depends on the future posture of American forces in the region, whether the nations hosting the installations will contribute to their repair and what reconstruction would look like, he said.

Of the \$29 billion, \$24 billion is tied to the cost of replacing and repairing equipment expended in the war, according to Hurst. He gave lawmakers a \$25 billion total war cost estimate at the end of April.

Hegseth, testifying alongside Hurst as well as Air Force Gen. Dan Caine, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said the Pentagon will share more official costs "when it's relevant and required." He would not say when the Pentagon would request additional money to finance the war.

Lawmakers of both parties on Tuesday urged for a swift and detailed accounting of

the conflict's full cost. Rep. Joe Morelle, D-N.Y., described congressional efforts to pry that number from the Pentagon since the war in Iran began at the end of February as long and "excruciating."

"I think General Washington reported quicker to the Continental Congress than this has been in terms of the reports to the United States Congress," he said.

Sen. Jack Reed, of Rhode Island, a member of the Senate defense appropriations panel and the top Democrat on the Senate Armed Services Committee, said senators have sent multiple letters in an unsuccessful effort to track down expenditures.

"Before we can reasonably appropriate additional money, we have to find out how the existing appropriated dollars have been spent," he told Hurst.

USFK leader: Fixating on drones is limiting

By **WYATT OLSON**
Stars and Stripes

WAIKIKI BEACH, Hawaii — The commander of U.S. troops in South Korea on Tuesday cautioned against fixating on Ukraine's successful use of drones to the point of failing to anticipate the next evolution of warfare.

"We can't just be stuck in saying, drones, drones, drones, drones," Gen. Xavier Brunson, commander of U.S. Forces Korea, said during the opening keynote address for the three-day Land Forces Pacific, of LANPAC, symposium in Waikiki Beach.

Brunson also leads United Nations Command and Combined Forces Command.

"I don't know if anybody's look-

ing at the next thing because oftentimes, we learn the wrong lessons and we get stuck with them because it's easy and we just stay there," he said.

In its ongoing defense against the 2022 Russian invasion, Ukraine has used commercially available drones to offset its foe's edge in conventional weaponry. Ukraine has deftly used cheap drones to kill Russian troops and destroy tanks, airfields and production facilities, among other targets.

During an afternoon keynote speech, Adm. Samuel Paparo, commander of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, underscored the sweeping change inexpensive drones have brought by describ-

ing their rise as a mega-trend in the nature of war.

"Proliferated unmanned systems have made cheap kill at scale more possible, more probable," he said. "All things being equal, these systems can be the vanguard of an assaulting force."

Simple, commercially available drones are one of the key elements of the Army's ongoing transformation into a lighter, more mobile force. That agility is considered essential for the type of island-hopping warfare that would unfold in a conflict in the Indo-Pacific, where China and its growing military are the greatest potential adversary.

Brunson's comments came in response to a question from the

audience about what keeps him awake at night as one of the Army's top leaders.

"We have to keep thinking about the next thing — and that keeps me awake," he said.

Brunson suggested that what lies beyond drones is "commercial space."

"Think about this," he said. "There are in low-Earth orbit tons of commercial satellites. Everybody wants to watch TV and be on the internet, so that'll be the last thing to get attacked."

"If you can find a way to leverage commercial space, then you maybe have assured positioning and navigation and ... the ability to see, sense and understand faster than our adversaries," he said.

Okinawa-based Marines embrace drone warfare through piloting courses

By **BRIAN McELHINEY**
Stars and Stripes

CAMP HANSEN, Okinawa — Marines on Okinawa are learning to build and fly surveillance and attack drones in new courses designed to help the service scale up its use of unmanned aircraft as the technology revolutionizes warfare.

The Basic Drone Operator Course is one of six piloting courses the Marine Corps announced in a December memorandum as the Corps works to field tens of thousands of commercial drones — or unmanned aerial systems — this year.

On Tuesday, reporters observed students during the second week of the course as they used computer flight simulators attached to joystick controllers and goggles and repaired training drones.

Students learn how to build a

seven-inch, first-person view drone from a kit, then progress to hovering and maneuvering through obstacles, instructor Cpl. Austin Schiffer told Stars and Stripes.

"Toward the latter part of the course, we start doing tactical employment — flight navigation," he said after giving a lecture on electronic warfare to about 20 Marines. "And then, eventually, we're going to get out to the range and see if they can execute some of the tests that we put them through."

The three-week course launched on Okinawa in November, a month before the announcement, III Marine Expeditionary Force spokesman 2nd Lt. James Selcke said by email Wednesday. In December, the Marines certified Okinawa's first 12 attack drone operators during a two-week competition.

Army eyes protein-rich rations for front lines

By **JENNIFER H. SVAN**
Stars and Stripes

The Army is exploring ways to produce meatless, protein-rich rations near the front lines, part of a broader push to reduce the massive logistical burden of feeding troops in future conflicts.

A notice posted by the service's Combat Feeding Division on April 29 to the federal government's contracting website called for industry and academia to partner with the Army in developing new technologies to produce "alternative proteins" downrange.

The Army calls the technology "strategically vital" because of its logistical benefit, cutting down on the "massive amount of transport and storage required to sustain troops," according to a Combat Capabilities Development Command on Monday.

The provisions need to be nutritious, protein-rich, tasty, lightweight, safe to eat and shelf-sta-

ble, according to the Army documents.

In a similar vein, a California startup named Biosphere was recently awarded a \$9 million Defense Department contract for the development of portable bioreactors that can produce protein rations from air, water and unspecified energy sources. The technology will be used to provide 2,800 calories per person per day for up to 18 service members, with plans to scale the system to support 250 personnel, the company said in a statement last week.

It was not clear whether the Biosphere contract was related to the Sam.gov announcement. The notice was issued to identify interested sources, with no contract to be awarded from the announcement, the document said.

Once developed, the meatless rations could be included in Meals, Ready to Eat, and the technology used could be applied commercially, officials said.

Golden Dome may cost \$1.2T over 20 years

By MATTHEW ADAMS
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Golden Dome missile defense system would cost \$1.2 trillion to build out, far more than the White House's proposal, according to the Congressional Budget Office, which released its estimate Tuesday.

The Golden Dome is envisioned as a ground- and space-based, integrated system of sensors, satellites and weapons capable of detecting and destroying missiles fired at the U.S. homeland.

The \$1.2 trillion estimate is to build and operate the system for

20 years. Just over \$1 trillion of the costs are for acquisition.

The space-based interceptor layer, a constellation of 7,800 satellites, accounts for about 70% of acquisition costs and 60% of total costs.

The office, a nonpartisan budget analysis agency, acknowledged that since the Defense Department has publicly released few details about the underlying architecture of the actual Golden Dome project, it's "impossible to estimate the long-term cost of the (Golden Dome for America) system being contemplated by DOD."

The system would cover the

entire U.S., including Alaska and Hawaii, and would have the capacity to fully engage an attack from a regional adversary such as North Korea.

"However, the system could be overwhelmed by a full-scale attack mounted by a peer or near-peer adversary. Furthermore, 'fully engage' is not the same as 'fully defeat' because no defense works perfectly every time," the 12-page report states.

President Donald Trump announced the Golden Dome anti-missile "shield" last year with a cost of \$175 billion and operational by the end of his term,

after signing an executive order in January 2025 that called for an "Iron Dome for America."

Iron Dome refers to an Israeli missile defense system that has performed well in conflicts with Hamas and Hezbollah groups but which protects a vastly smaller territory than envisioned by Golden Dome.

Congressional estimates put the initial cost of the system at \$185 billion, with an operational target of about 2035. If the entire system, including space-based interceptors, were built, the cost would be over \$1 trillion over several decades, according to Aviation Week magazine.

Charges filed in Baltimore's Key Bridge collapse

The Baltimore Sun

BALTIMORE — Federal prosecutors have charged Synergy Marine Group, Synergy Maritime and one employee in connection with the March 2024 collapse of the Francis Scott Key Bridge in Baltimore, alleging a conspiracy to conceal dangerous safety violations aboard the Dali container ship that contributed to the disaster and led to the deaths of six.

The indictment charges Singapore-based Synergy Marine Group, India-based Synergy Maritime and Radhakrishnan

Karthik Nair, a 47-year-old Indian citizen who served as the Dali's technical superintendent, with conspiracy, obstruction of an agency proceeding, false statements and willingly failing to immediately notify the U.S. Coast Guard of a known hazardous condition aboard the vessel.

Prosecutors allege the companies operated the Dali with an unauthorized fuel system that bypassed critical safety safeguards meant to prevent a total loss of power. The two corporations also face misdemeanor charges under

the Clean Water Act, Oil Pollution Act and Refuse Act for pollution released into the Patapsco River.

Federal authorities allege the ship would have regained power in time to safely clear the span had it been using the proper fuel supply pumps.

The indictment alleges that crew members and shore-side personnel concealed repeated safety problems, including prior blackouts and hazardous operating conditions that should have been reported to the Coast Guard. Prosecutors also allege that Nair

later falsely told National Transportation Safety Board investigators he was unaware the Dali was using the flushing pump to supply fuel to its generators.

If convicted of the charges, the two companies face up to five years of probation for each felony count. U.S. Attorney for the District of Maryland Kelly Hayes said they could also be fined up to \$10 billion, which is twice the loss caused by the collision.

If Nair is convicted of all the charges he faces, he could spend the rest of his life in prison.

Court pauses order finding Trump tariffs unlawful

Bloomberg News

A federal appeals court has temporarily paused a ruling that declared President Donald Trump's latest global tariffs unlawful, as the judges weigh the administration's request to allow officials to keep collecting the levies while the legal fight continues.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit issued a brief order on Tuesday entering what's known as an administrative stay, and set a fast

schedule for both sides to file briefs on the administration's request to leave the tariffs intact while it appeals.

The small businesses and Democratic state officials who sued are due to respond in a week.

The order means importers will continue to pay the 10% tariffs under Trump's use of Section 122 of the Trade Act of 1974 for now.

In its ruling earlier this month finding the Section 122

tariffs invalid, the U.S. Court of International Trade had only blocked the government from enforcing the levies against two small businesses that sued and Washington state.

But the Justice Department argued against allowing the broader judgment declaring the tariffs policy unlawful to remain in place while it appeals. The government said that would undermine the president's economic agenda, interfere with trade negotia-

tions with foreign governments and pull already-stretched resources from the effort of processing refund claims for an earlier round of tariffs that the U.S. Supreme Court struck down.

Government lawyers predicted that if the ruling against the Section 122 tariffs took effect right away, it would spur the thousands of other importers who have been paying them to flood the trade court with their own lawsuits.

Uncertainty over hantavirus complicates response

Bloomberg News

Passengers from the MV *Hondius* cruise ship are being repatriated under a patchwork of measures that reflect uncertainty over how this strain of hantavirus spreads, complicating efforts to contain the deadly outbreak.

Some passengers are being placed in biocontainment units, notably in France, for at least two weeks. Australia plans to quarantine passengers in a purpose-built facility outside Perth. But in the Netherlands, most are being asked to self-isolate for six weeks, with short outdoor walks permitted under masking and distancing rules.

The divergent responses come as health officials stress that the risk to the broader public remains low and that hanta-

virus doesn't spread between people as easily as COVID-19. But exactly how contagious the Andes strain is across a crowded room, for instance, and whether people are infectious before developing symptoms, remains unclear.

Without clear answers about how the virus spreads, it becomes harder to define who may have been exposed, raising the risk that some cases could be missed.

That's forcing authorities to make judgment calls in the absence of clear evidence, echoing early uncertainty about transmission seen in outbreaks such as COVID-19.

Officials at the World Health Organization say the uncertainty extends to exactly when people become infectious.

Most hantavirus infections are linked to contact with rodents or their droppings. The Andes strain, found in South America, is the only known variant capable of spreading between people, and even then, such transmission is considered uncommon.

Decades of experience in South America have shown the virus to be associated with "rare human-to-human transmission after close and prolonged contact with a sick, infected person," Erica Pan, California's public health officer, told reporters Monday.

But the available evidence is limited.

That's shaping the response. In the Netherlands, 12 staff members at a hospital in Nijmegen were placed in preventive

quarantine after laboratory samples from an infected patient were not initially handled under the strictest protocols, even as authorities said the infection risk was low.

Health agencies still rely on operational thresholds to guide contact tracing. The WHO, for example, defines close contact as being within 6.6 feet of an infected person for more than 15 minutes.

U.S. guidance uses similar criteria but notes that "these thresholds are not absolute" and should be interpreted based on the setting of the interaction.

In practice, authorities have often gone further, with U.S. officials treating all passengers aboard the ship during the exposure period as high-risk contacts.

S. Korea examines phased support for Hormuz mission

BY JULIE MASSON
AND YOONJIN LEE
Stars and Stripes

South Korea's defense minister said Seoul is considering phased support for U.S.-led efforts to restore safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz following attacks on commercial shipping near the waterway.

Speaking Tuesday at the South Korean Embassy in Washington, D.C., after two days of meetings at the Pentagon, Ahn Gyu-back said the government was reviewing options that could include "declaring of support, dispatching personnel, sharing information and providing military assets," the Yonhap News Agency reported Wednesday.

A Ministry of National Defense spokesman confirmed the report's accuracy in a text message to reporters Wednesday in Seoul.

Ahn said South Korea would

"participate as a responsible member of the international community" in efforts to secure maritime traffic through the strait but emphasized he did not specifically discuss troop deployments with Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth.

Any military involvement would have to comply with South Korean law, Ahn said.

He also said talks did not include discussions about reducing U.S. troop levels in South Korea or changing the role of U.S. Forces Korea.

Ahn was in Washington this week for the Korea-U.S. Integrated Defense Dialogue with the Pentagon.

The comments came days after South Korea's Foreign Ministry confirmed that a Panama-flagged cargo ship operated by South Korean company HMM Co. was struck by two airborne objects near the Strait of Hormuz.

Iran has denied involvement.

FBI director pressed over drinking reports

CQ-Roll Call

WASHINGTON — FBI Director Kash Patel denied allegations about his alcohol consumption Tuesday as Senate Democrats raised concerns about his leadership, pressing him on a series of rolling controversies at the agency.

At one point during a more than two-hour budget hearing, Patel lashed out at Sen. Chris Van Hollen after the Maryland Democrat pointed to allegations outlined in an article from *The Atlantic* magazine. Patel has filed a defamation lawsuit over the reporting.

"I will not be tarnished by baseless allegations," Patel said during the exchange before the Senate Commerce-Justice-Science Appropriations Subcommittee.

The exchanges occurred at a hearing in which Republicans turned their attention to other key Justice Department offi-

cials who appeared on the panel, or asked less contentious questions of Patel.

Under questioning from Van Hollen, Patel denied allegations of episodes of excessive drinking and unexplained absences during his time as FBI director, saying accusations were "unequivocally, categorically false."

He also said there were no occasions in which his security detail had trouble locating or waking him. "It's a total farce. I don't even know where you get this stuff, but it doesn't make it credible," Patel said.

Moments later, Patel escalated the exchange, accusing Van Hollen of "slinging margaritas in El Salvador," an apparent reference to the senator meeting with Kilmar Armando Abrego Garcia, the wrongly deported immigrant at the center of a high-profile legal battle tied to the Trump administration's mass deportation efforts.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Officials identify worker killed after airport crash

FL ORLANDO — A Delta Airlines employee was killed last week after a vehicle crash at Orlando International Airport, and officials identified the victim on Monday.

The fatal accident occurred May 7 around 11 p.m. while a Delta flight full of passengers was parked at a jet bridge. The bridge was struck by a vehicle used to tow planes, according to the Federal Aviation Administration. The passengers had to exit the plane using its rear door and stairs.

Daniel Maldonado, 49, was the employee killed Thursday, the Orange-Osceola Medical Examiner's Office said. The medical examiner's office said Maldonado died from multiple blunt-impact injuries, and it ruled the death an accident.

Delta confirmed earlier Monday the "loss of a team member" in an on-the-job incident, although the airline did not name the person killed or specify what happened.

Council member drops suit, ending proceedings

NY NEW YORK — Council member Vickie Paladino has agreed to drop her lawsuit against the New York City Council, which will now end disciplinary proceedings against her — the latest step in an ongoing saga over a series of anti-Muslim tweets posted by the council member.

Under the settlement agreement, Paladino must delete the tweets, remove references to her position as a council member on her personal X account

and put out a statement. She will not be required to publicly apologize.

"The disciplinary charge against me has been withdrawn and I am withdrawing my lawsuit," Paladino's statement reads, per the settlement agreement.

"To be clear, my personal social media posts were not directed at any council member or staff. I am responsible for the content, I never intended to make council members or staff feel unwelcomed or unsafe in their work environment. I send a heartfelt thank you to the court for facilitating the resolution."

Paladino filed the suit in March in response to the Council charging her with disorderly conduct for a handful of Islamophobic posts, arguing they violated the legislative body's rules.

The suit was aimed at stopping the disciplinary process.

Accusations involving kids lead to removal of priest

IL CHICAGO — The Archdiocese of Chicago removed a Little Italy priest accused of "improper and inappropriate conversations and communications" with children and adult women, Cardinal Blase J. Cupich, the archbishop of Chicago, wrote in a Saturday letter.

The Rev. Jose Molina had been serving as the temporary minister at St. Francis of Assisi Parish since August 2025.

"We appreciate the courage it takes to step forward and encourage others who believe they have experienced abuse or inappropriate behavior by a member of the clergy, religious or lay employee of the Archdio-

cese to report it to the Office for the Protection of Children and Youth," Cupich wrote.

Because Molina is a member of the Institute of the Incarnate Word religious order, he will return to its provincial house for the time being. The archdiocese will be cooperating with the order's investigation, according to the letter.

In addition to removing him from the pulpit, the archdiocese reported the allegations against Molina to the civil authorities and offered assistance to those who made the allegations against him.

On its website, the archdiocese prominently features resources for reporting child abuse within the church, including information about a ministry offering "pastoral care, support and resources" to survivors of "clerical sexual abuse."

Airline: Ammo belonged to law enforcement

CO DENVER — A Frontier Airlines flight deplaned at Denver International Airport on Sunday after an ammunition magazine was discovered on board, according to the airline.

The magazine was found as the Phoenix-bound flight prepared to take off, Frontier spokesperson Rob Harris said in a statement. The plane was scheduled to depart at 8:08 p.m. Sunday.

"As a matter of precaution, passengers were deplaned and rescreened," Harris said. "The aircraft also underwent a security sweep with no additional findings."

Harris said investigators believe the magazine belonged to a law enforcement officer on a

previous flight.

Neither the airport nor the airline has said where or how the gun magazine was discovered, or how it made it onto the plane.

Gun parts — including magazines, clips, bolts and firing pins — are prohibited in carry-on baggage, but may be transported in checked baggage, according to the Transportation Security Administration.

The delay caused the crew on Frontier flight 4765 to exceed their duty time, and passengers were rebooked on an early Monday flight, Harris said.

Teen accused of injuring parents over punishment

MN BEMIDJI — A 16-year-old boy from Bemidji is accused of shooting his parents and a third adult after he lost his cellphone privileges, charges say.

The teen faces four felony charges stemming from the shooting on May 7, including illegal possession of a firearm and three counts of assault with a dangerous weapon.

Prosecutors are asking for the teen to be tried as an adult in Beltrami County District Court.

All victims are expected to recover. The teen's mom was discharged from a Bemidji hospital; the dad is being treated at a Fargo, N.D., hospital. She declined interview requests Monday, but in a video from inside the hospital posted to Facebook, the parents extended thanks for the love and support of well-wishers.

"It's been a rough road, but as a family we will get through this," the dad said. "And we still love our son," the mom added.

— From wire reports

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Wemby sparks Spurs to 3-2 series lead

Associated Press

SAN ANTONIO — Victor Wembanyama atoned for his first career ejection with another huge performance, finishing with 27 points, 17 rebounds, five assists and three blocks as the San Antonio Spurs beat the Minnesota Timberwolves 126-97 on Tuesday night to take a 3-2 lead in their second-round series.

At 22 years old, Wembanyama is the third-youngest player in NBA history to post that stat line in a playoff game, trailing only Magic Johnson (20) and Luka Doncic (21).

"I was fresh, feeling good," Wembanyama said. "Honestly, it's hard to tell. It was just Game 5. Obviously, I'm going to be excited (and) to have butterflies. So, excitement is not something abnormal at this point in the playoffs."

Keldon Johnson had 21 points, De'Aaron Fox added 18 and Stephon Castle had 17 as San Antonio moved a game away from the Western Conference finals. The Spurs can ad-

vance to face Oklahoma City with a victory in Game 6 on Friday in Minneapolis.

Anthony Edwards, who was limited to eight points in the first half, finished with 20 points for Minnesota. Julius Randle and Jaden McDaniels added 17 points apiece.

Wembanyama returned after being ejected early in the second quarter of Minnesota's 114-109 victory Sunday during Game 4 in Minneapolis. Wembanyama received a Flagrant 2 foul after elbowing Naz Reid in the throat.

Both teams continued to hammer each other, with Reid receiving a technical foul for pushing Wembanyama in the back on a Minnesota free throw with 2:24 left in the first half.

"I felt like, to start the game, we knew it was going to be physical," Castle said.

"So, just making that a point of emphasis and trying to keep them off the offensive glass. I feel like we started the game off well and that's where our runs

came from. But obviously they're a good team. They're going to go on their own run. So, just try not to hang our head when that does happen and be able to respond and spark another run for ourselves."

The foul by Reid fired up Wembanyama, not that he needed any additional motivation.

Wembanyama was 6 for 8 from the field and 2 for 3 on 3-pointers in scoring 18 points in the opening quarter.

"I think it's super important for us the way we start the game, because it sets the tone," Wembanyama said, "Now the challenge is to do it for 48 minutes."

The Timberwolves opened the third quarter on a 14-2 run to tie the game at 61 after trailing by 18 points in the first half. Minnesota tipped away three attempted alley-oop passes to Wembanyama before they reached the 7-foot-4 post.

The Spurs recaptured a double-digit lead in the third

spurred by Johnson's block on Rudy Gobert's attempted dunk followed by his short jumper after bodying Edwards under the rim.

"We went away from what was working," Timberwolves coach Chris Finch said. "Our defense just cratered. We gave up 30 points, I think, in the last six minutes of the third quarter. A lot of it was just ball contain, ball contain stuff."

San Antonio held its opponent under 100 points for the fifth time in 10 games this postseason.

"I thought we did a good job of having resistance early in the clock," Spurs coach Mitch Johnson said.

"They've shown as the series has gone on, they've tried to play faster at times and they're tough when they get downhill. I think when we've had better starting spots, more connectivity at the start of possessions, I think it's really helped us be on a string and be organized and connected defensively."

76ers fire Morey, keep Nurse after being swept by Knicks

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — The Philadelphia 76ers fired president Daryl Morey on Tuesday and decided to keep Nick Nurse as their coach after the team was swept in the Eastern Conference semifinals.

The 76ers were easily ousted by the New York Knicks to end Morey's sixth season in charge, and the organization quickly decided that someone else would lead the basketball operations department.

Sixers managing partner Josh Harris said in a statement that he and Morey had spoken and decided it was time for a fresh start.

Bob Myers, the former Golden State Warriors general manager, will lead the search for Morey's replacement and will over-

see the department in the interim.

"To our fans, your frustration and disappointment are understandable and warranted," Harris said. "We have fallen well short of our own expectations and failed to deliver in the way this city deserves. That bothers me deeply and I have confidence in Bob to establish a path forward for our franchise."

The Sixers went 270-212 in the regular season under Morey but just 28-26 in the postseason, failing to advance past the second round. They returned to the playoffs this season after missing them for the only time in Morey's tenure in 2024-25, when they went 24-58.

Myers built the Golden State teams that won NBA championships in 2015, '17, '18 and '22. He

worked as a commentator at ESPN after leaving the Warriors before joining Harris Blitzer Sports & Entertainment in October 2025 as president of sports.

Morey joined the 76ers in 2020 after 14 seasons with the Houston Rockets, including 13 as their general manager. The Rockets made the playoffs in his final eight seasons and he was voted the NBA's executive of the year in 2018 after Houston went 65-17 and reached the Western Conference finals.

In 2019, he sent a tweet in support of anti-government protesters in Hong Kong, angering Chinese officials and wrecking the NBA's lucrative relationship with the country. The Rockets had previously enjoyed enormous popularity in China after drafting Yao Ming with the No. 1

pick in 2002.

Morey, best known for his analytical approach — he has an MBA from MIT and serves as the co-chair of the school's annual Sports Analytics Conference — failed to build a title contender around oft-injured center Joel Embiid. He acquired James Harden, his former star in Houston, and later added another high-priced veteran in Paul George.

He did well with recent draft choices Tyrese Maxey and VJ Edgecombe, last year's No. 3 pick. But he also made a heavily criticized deal this season when he sent Jared McCain, a 2024 first-round pick, to Oklahoma City. McCain averaged 11.5 points in the defending champion Thunder's second-round sweep of the Lakers.

Sabres defeat Canadiens to tie series

Associated Press

MONTREAL — Zach Benson broke a tie on a third-period power play on his 21st birthday and the Buffalo Sabres beat the Montreal Canadiens 3-2 on Tuesday night in Game 4 to even the Eastern Conference semifinal series.

Benson took a pass in the slot from Josh Doan, kicked the puck to his stick and put a backhander past goalie Jakub Dobes at 4:41 of the third. The goal came with Jake Evans off for holding Peyton Krebs.

Game 5 is Thursday night in Buffalo, with Game 6 in Montreal on Saturday night. The series winner will face Carolina in the Eastern Conference final. The Hurricanes swept both of their series.

Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen replaced Alex Lyon in goal after the Sabres dropped Games 2 and 3,

making 28 saves in his first action since being pulled in the third period of a Game 2 loss to Boston in the first round.

“At this point of the year, it doesn’t matter to me (if I start). As long as we win, that’s the most important thing,” Luukkonen said. “It feels good to come in and be able to help the team to win, too.”

Tage Thompson tied it for Buffalo in the second period with a fluke goal and also had an assist. Defenseman Mattias Samuelsson opened the scoring and Doan had two assists.

Alex Newhook and Cole Caufield scored for Montreal. Dobes stopped 19 shots.

“Broke them down a bunch, had our looks, goalie made some big saves and that kept him in it,” Caufield said. “Thought we played a pretty good game.

There’s some things that we can always get better at, but to see a fluke goal like that go in, it’s obviously not the bounce you want.”

Thompson tied it at 2 on four-minute power play seven minutes into the second when his dump-in from just over center ice deflected off the glass in the left corner to the crease and bounced in off Dobes’ right leg.

“I’ll take it,” he said. “It’s a nice feeling when you see that.”

Buffalo got the extended power play when Montreal’s Alexandre Carrier was called for the double minor after high-sticking and cutting Rasmus Dahlin.

The Canadiens failed to take advantage of a four-minute power play of their own after Bowen Byram was sent off for high-sticking Alexandre Texier late in the second period. Montreal was 1 for 7 on the power play.

Buffalo opened the scoring on Samuelsson’s goal at 6:32 of the first period, and appeared it make it 2-0 1:30 later when a video review confirmed Jack Quinn’s shot crossed the goal line inside Dobes’ glove. However, Montreal successfully challenged for goalie interference on Konsta Helenius.

“Which I totally disagree with,” Sabres coach Lindy Ruff said. “Just for the fact that Dobes always is swinging his stick. He initiated the contact with Helenius ... I really thought that that was going our way.”

Newhook then tied it at 1 with 9:52 left in the first with his fifth goal of the series and sixth of the playoffs. Caufield gave the Canadiens the lead with 13 seconds to go in the period, beating Luukkonen from close range on a power play.

Dorofeyev’s goal in OT lifts Golden Knights past Ducks

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Pavel Dorofeyev has made a name for himself with his shot from the right circle, the epitome of a skilled player making the best use of his talents by setting the Vegas record for power-play goals with 20 this season.

But this is the Stanley Cup playoffs and toughness is asked of all the players.

Dorofeyev took a hard shot off his right knee in the second period Tuesday night, forcing him to leave the ice for a few minutes. But Dorofeyev, who earlier had a power-play goal, scored at 4:10 of overtime to give Vegas a 3-2 victory over the Anaheim Ducks, moving the Golden Knights a victory away from advancing to the Western Conference final.

“I just blocked a shot,” said Dorofeyev, who has seven goals this postseason. “It’s kind of a (lousy) part of my job, but it hurts more when I miss it. I just had to get myself together and get back

on the ice.”

Game 6 of the second-round series is Thursday night at Anaheim.

The Golden Knights can reach the conference final for the first time since winning the Stanley Cup in 2023. Anaheim, making its first playoff appearance in eight years, will try force a Game 7 back in Las Vegas on Saturday.

Tomas Hertl had gone 29 games going back to the regular season without a goal, but now has two in two games. He also had the primary assist on Dorofeyev’s power-play goal in the first period.

Jack Eichel had two assists, including the primary one on the winner.

Carter Hart stopped 34 shots, two nights after allowing four goals on 23 shots in a 4-3 loss in Anaheim. Hart bounced back from a similar situation in the opening series, allowing four goals on 12 shots in Game 3 at Utah before winning five of his

next six starts.

“We have all the faith in the world in Carter,” said Vegas defenseman Rasmus Andersson, who disputed the notion Hart was coming off a down performance. “I look at the Utah series and he was really good there, and he stole a couple of games for us. ... But every time you lose a game in the playoffs, it’s about how you bounce back. I thought all 20 guys who played tonight bounced back and Carter led that.”

Ducks defenseman Olen Zellweger scored his first career playoff goal from the left circle to tie it at 2 with 3:05 left in regulation. Beckett Sennecke extended his goals streak to four games with a power-play score. Mason McTavish and Cutter Gauthier each has two assists and Lukas Dostal made 29 saves.

Ducks center Ryan Poehling was helped off the ice after being checked hard into the boards by Vegas defenseman Brayden

McNabb nearly midway through the first period. McNabb received a five-minute major for interference and was sent to the dressing room with a game misconduct, costing the Golden Knights a first-pair blue liner.

Golden Knights coach John Tortorella said he wouldn’t address whether the officials made the right call to make that a major penalty and eject McNabb, but quickly questioned why there wasn’t call when Vegas defenseman Dylan Coghlan was hit at the end of regulation.

The Ducks got a goal off the McNabb-induced power play when Sennecke scored off a rebound. Dorofeyev answered after taking the puck from Chris Kreider, shifting to the slot and snapping a shot past Dostal.

Hertl’s rebound goal at 4:48 of the third period nearly stood up before Zellweger took advantage of extended offensive zone time to force extra play.

Schwarber homers again in Phils' win

Associated Press

BOSTON — Kyle Schwarber tied a Phillies record by homering for the fifth consecutive game, hitting his major league-high 17th to lead Philadelphia over the Boston Red Sox 2-1 on Tuesday night and give Don Mattingly his 900th managerial win.

Philadelphia (20-22) has won three straight and six of eight, improving to 11-3 since Mattingly took over as manager from Ron Thomson on April 28.

Zach Wheeler (2-0) gave up one run and six hits in 7½ innings with four strikeouts.

Schwarber has six homers in his last five games. He joined Bobby Abreu, Dick Allen, Odúbel Herrera, Rhys Hoskins, Mike Schmidt, Trea Turner and Chase Utley as Phillies homering in five games in a row.

Mattingly became the sixth active manager to reach 900 wins, joining Terry Francona, A.J. Hinch, Dave Roberts, Kevin Cash, and Craig Counsell.

Jhoan Duran gave up a hit and a walk in the ninth but picked up his sixth save.

Boston has lost three of its last four.

Red Sox opener Jovani Morán (0-1) pitched one inning, giving up the homer to Schwarber. Brayan Bello went 6½ innings after that, yielding one run and four hits.

It was the first game Philadelphia has played against Boston since Phillies president of baseball operations Dave Dombrowski fired manager Rob Thomson last month and tried to hire former Red Sox skipper Alex Cora, who had lost his job two days earlier.

After Cora turned down the job, Dombrowski promoted Mattingly from bench coach.

Schwarber started the Phillies' scoring off in the first inning, jumping on Morán's 92 mph fastball and hitting it 386 feet and beyond the reach of right fielder Willyer Abreu and into Red Sox bullpen.

Brayson Stott had an RBI double

in the second.

Boston had a chance to tie it with Mickey Gasper on and one out in the seventh when Abreu hit a high flyball to right field. But it came up about 6 feet short of the right field fence and was pulled in by Adolis García. Ceddanne Rafaela hit an RBI single later in the inning.

Braves 5, Cubs 2: Grant Holmes combined with three relievers on a one-hitter, Austin Riley and Mike Yastrzemski homered and host Atlanta beat Chicago in the opener of a three-game set between the National League's top teams.

Didier Fuentes (2-0) worked three scoreless innings in relief of Holmes, who had not pitched since May 1. Atlanta's starter worked four innings, allowing a solo homer to Alex Bregman and an RBI grounder by Moisés Ballesteros. He walked four and struck out five while throwing 78 pitches.

Dylan Lee pitched a perfect eighth and Raisel Iglesias went 1-2-3 in the ninth for his seventh save. Iglesias has not allowed a run over 11½ innings this season.

Yastrzemski was 2-for-2 with three RBIs, including his two-run homer in the fifth inning that landed in front of the Chop House restaurant in right field. Earlier in the inning, Riley hit a solo shot 409 feet to left field that tied it at 2-all.

Nationals 10, Reds 4: James Wood hit his 12th home run of the season, and Luis García Jr. and Daylen Lile each went deep twice as part of a six-homer night by Washington in a road win over Cincinnati.

Brady House also homered for the Nationals, who improved to 14-9 on the road. That's the second-most road wins in the majors behind Atlanta's 16.

Lile and García became the sixth pair of Nationals players to homer twice in the same game. The last were Brian Dozier and Juan Soto on Aug. 18, 2019.

Washington has 50 homers this season and surpassed its previous

high of four in a game, set on May 6 in a win over Minnesota.

Yankees 6, Orioles 2: Paul Goldschmidt homered on the first pitch of the game, Trent Grisham hit a three-run shot and New York beat Baltimore to end a four-game losing streak.

Will Warren (5-1) allowed two runs and four hits in 5½ innings for the Yankees. It was a bounce-back performance by the right-hander, who yielded six runs over four innings to Texas in his previous start.

Pitching for the first time since April 25, lefty Trevor Rogers (2-4) gave up six runs and six hits, raising his ERA to 5.77 compared to 1.81 in 2025.

Guardians 3, Angels 2: Angel Martínez homered and Cleveland's pitchers struck out 13 as the host Guardians beat Los Angeles.

Martínez, Patrick Bailey and Bryan Rocchio drove in runs for Cleveland, which improved to 29-4 against the Angels at Progressive Field since 2015. The Guardians have won the first two games in the series despite being out-hit twice.

The Angels dropped to 8-17 on the road

Twins 3, Marlins 0: Bailey Ober threw a two-hitter for his first career shutout, leading Minnesota to a home victory over Miami in their series opener.

Byron Buxton stole home and Ryan Jeffers hit a two-run homer for the Twins, who have won three straight games.

Ober (4-2) threw 89 pitches in his third career complete game. He struck out seven, walked none and didn't allow a hit after the fourth.

Eury Pérez (2-5) didn't allow a hit until the fifth, when Trevor Larnach's single moved Buxton to third to set up the double-steal.

Mets 10, Tigers 2: A.J. Ewing gave the Mets just the offensive jolt they were looking for throughout his impressive major league debut, and Freddy Peralta pitched six effective innings in New York's home victory over

Detroit.

New York, which entered with the worst record in the majors at 15-25, is already missing three injured regulars: shortstop Francisco Lindor, first baseman Jorge Polanco and center fielder Luis Robert Jr.

Pirates 3, Rockies 1: Paul Skenes allowed two hits over eight masterful innings to help host Pittsburgh topple Colorado.

The reigning National League Cy Young winner carried a no-hitter into the seventh while retiring 18 of the first 19 batters he faced. Colorado's Mickey Moniak broke up the no-hit bid when he dumped a single into left-center field with one out in the seventh. Skenes (6-2) retired Hunter Goodman and TJ Ruml to end the threat.

Brewers 6, Padres 4: Joey Ortiz homered for the first time in nearly 10 months and drove in two runs as host Milwaukee beat San Diego for their fifth straight victory.

Brandon Sproat (1-2) struck out six and allowed three runs over 5½ innings to pick up his first career victory.

Cardinals 6, Athletics 4: JJ Wetherholt hit a two-run homer, José Fermín drove in two with a double and visiting St. Louis beat the Athletics.

The Cardinals snapped a two-game skid and improved their major league-best road record to 14-7. They have yet to lose three straight road games this season.

Giants 6, Dodgers 2: Harrison Bader and Eric Haase homered back-to-back for the tying and go-ahead runs in the fifth inning, and visiting San Francisco beat Los Angeles.

Haase tied the game with a solo shot in the third — his first homer since May 7, 2025. He nearly went deep a third time in the seventh when Andy Pages caught Haase's long drive at the center field wall. Bader's two-strike homer was his first since March 30 and tied the game before Haase went deep again for a 3-2 lead.