

STARS AND STRIPES[®]

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Afghans seem surprised by cease-fire talk

The Washington Post

President Donald Trump's confident assertion that the Taliban is ready and even eager for a cease-fire demanded by the United States in Afghanistan's 18-year-old war may be more wishful thinking than reality.

Declaring that the U.S.-Taliban talks he abruptly canceled in September are back in motion, Trump said during a Thanksgiving Day visit to troops in Afghanistan that the Taliban "wants to make a deal. And we're meeting with them, and we're saying it has to be a cease-fire."

"They didn't want to do a cease-fire, but now they do want to do a cease-fire," Trump said of the militants. "It will probably work out that way. ... We've made tremendous progress," he added.

But on Friday neither the Taliban nor the government of Afghan President Ashraf Ghani indicated that a cease-fire was near, or even being discussed in resumed U.S. negotiations.

At the time the U.S.-Taliban talks ended, the two sides were preparing to sign a draft agreement that called for a reduction in violence. But it specifically declared that any discussion of a cease-fire was to be left to follow-on negotiations between the militants and the government in Kabul.

In a statement, the Taliban said that remains their understanding. "We are ready

to talk, but we have the same stance to resume the talks from where it was suspended," Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid told *The Washington Post*.

Ghani spokesman Sediq Seddiqi said that Trump's brief visit there was "important," but that "we will have to see" if there has been any change in the status of peace talks.

"It is too early to comment on any changes or any perceived changes," Seddiqi said.

Even the administration voiced a lower expectation than Trump. "As the president said, we are restarting talks with the Taliban. The focus will be on reducing violence," said a senior administration official, who like others discussed the closed-door talks on the condition of anonymity. "If an agreement can be reached, the two sides could potentially expand the talks and pave the way for signing a peace agreement."

After nearly a year of U.S.-Taliban negotiations, held in the Qatari capital of Doha and led on the U.S. side by special envoy Zalmay Khalilzad, they reached a four-part agreement that included a partial withdrawal of U.S. troops, a Taliban pledge to sever relations with al-Qaida and to ensure that none of the territory it controls — now more than 50% of Afghanistan — would be used for terrorism activities directed at the

United States or its allies.

The Taliban also committed to beginning direct talks with the Afghan government, with a cease-fire at the top of the agenda.

But after secretly planning a meeting with Taliban negotiators at Camp David to seal the deal, Trump suddenly canceled the agreement and negotiations altogether, saying that "as far as I'm concerned, they're dead."

Trump said at the time he had called off the talks after the Taliban took responsibility for an attack that killed 12 people, including a U.S. service member. "What kind of people would kill so many in order to seemingly strengthen their bargaining position?" Trump said in a tweet.

The Taliban said they would be willing to continue talking, even as Afghanistan headed toward heavily contested presidential elections that Ghani hoped would strengthen his hand in direct government talks with the militants.

Barred from formally restarting the discussion, Khalilzad has conducted low-profile consultations with Afghanistan and regional governments, and in recent days began informal conversations with the Taliban.

Although the election took place in late September, no winner has been declared amid charges of widespread irregularities at the ballot box.

Iraqi prime minister resigns amid more violence

Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Three anti-government protesters were shot dead and at least 58 wounded in Baghdad and southern Iraq on Saturday, security and medical officials said, as Prime Minister Adel Abdul-Mahdi formally submitted his resignation to parliament.

Lawmakers were expected to either vote or accept outright Abdul-Mahdi's resignation letter in a parliamentary session Sunday, two members of parliament said.

The prime minister announced Thursday he would hand parliament his resignation Friday amid mounting pressure from mass anti-government protests, a day after more

than 40 demonstrators were killed by security forces in Baghdad and southern Iraq. The announcement also came after Iraq's top Shiite cleric withdrew his support for the government in a weekly sermon.

The formal resignation came after an emergency Cabinet session earlier in which ministers approved the document and the resignation of key staffers, including Abdul-Mahdi's chief of staff.

In a pre-recorded speech, Abdul-Mahdi addressed Iraqis, saying that following parliament's recognition of his stepping down, the Cabinet would be demoted to caretaker status, unable to pass new laws and make key decisions.

He said the government had managed to

push through important job-creating projects and improve electricity generation.

"But unfortunately, these events took place," he said, referring to the mass protest movement that engulfed Iraq on Oct. 1. "We need to be fair to our people and listen to them."

At least 400 people have died since the leaderless uprising shook Iraq with thousands of Iraqis taking to the streets in Baghdad and the predominantly Shiite southern Iraq decrying corruption, poor services, lack of jobs and calling for an end to the post-2003 political system.

Security forces have used live fire, tear gas and sound bombs to disperse crowds leading to heavy casualties.

London's attacker had served time on terrorism charges

Associated Press

LONDON — UK counterterrorism police Saturday searched for clues into how a man imprisoned for terrorism offenses before his release last year managed to stab several people before being tackled by bystanders and shot dead by officers on London Bridge. Two people were killed and three wounded.

Neil Basu, London's police counterterrorism chief, said 28-year-old Usman Khan was attending a meeting of Learning Together, which works to educate prisoners, when he launched Friday's attack just yards from the site of a deadly 2017 van and knife rampage.

Basu said the suspect appeared to be wearing a bomb vest but it turned out to be "a hoax explosive device." Police said they were treating the stabbings as a terrorist attack and were not actively looking for other suspects.

Health officials said one of the wounded was in critical but stable condition, one was stable and the third had less serious injuries. Police have not named the two who died.

The attack raises difficult questions for Britain's government and security services. Police said Khan was convicted in 2012 of terrorism offenses and released in December 2018 "on license," which means he had to meet certain conditions or face recall to prison. Several British media outlets reported that he was wearing an electronic ankle bracelet at the time of the attack.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who visited the scene Saturday, said he had "long argued" that it was a "mistake to allow

serious and violent criminals to come out of prison early." He said extra police patrols on the streets would be added "for reassurance purposes."

Khan had been convicted as part of a group that denied plotting to target major sites including Parliament, the U.S. Embassy and individuals including Johnson, then the mayor of London, the dean of St. Paul's Cathedral in London and two rabbis.

Khan admitted to a lesser charge of engaging in conduct for the preparation of acts of terrorism. He had been secretly taped plotting attacks and talking about martyrdom as a possibility.

Khan and his accomplices had links to radical preacher Anjem Choudary. A mobile phone seized at the time contained material related to the banned group that Choudary founded. The preacher was released from prison in 2018 but is under heavy surveillance and a curfew.

Choudary for years has been one of the highest-profile faces of radical Islam in Britain, leading groups including al-Muhajiroun, Islam4UK and Muslims Against Crusades.

Police on Saturday were searching an apartment block in Stafford, 150 miles northwest of London, for clues. Khan was believed to have lived in the area after his release from prison.

Britain's Parole Board said in a statement it had no role in releasing Khan, who "appears to have been released automatically on license (as required by law), without ever being referred to the board," it said.

Intel world hobnobs at hush-hush charity event

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Sometime earlier this year, one of the most elite social events in Washington took place, but without any fanfare or news coverage.

It drew about 1,800 attendees and Grammy-winning rocker Lenny Kravitz performed. Yet there were no written invitations, and the date and location were carefully guarded secrets.

The annual charitable event is mischievously known as Spookstock. While many Washington insiders, let alone the public, haven't heard of it, the gala has become a centerpiece for the capital region's tightknit intelligence and military special operations communities.

Now in its seventh year, Spookstock has raised millions for the CIA Officers Memorial Foundation and the Special Operations Warrior Foundation, which look after the families of CIA officers and special operations forces killed in the field. Last year, after expenses, each charity received about \$400,000, according to Spookstock board member Mark Kelton.

The event is essentially fueled by defense contractors and mainstays of the military-industrial complex that pay big money for a table or a balcony box. Kelton, a retired CIA officer, would only say those corporate boxes are "not cheap." Other government employees or members of military who secure an invitation pay a much lower, but still undisclosed, rate.

The invitation list and event details are closely guarded by Kelton and the four-member board. Given the clandestine nature of some of the participants' work life, news coverage and social media postings are avoided. The only real online traces are a smattering of articles, some briefs in intelligence-focused newsletters and a few unauthorized YouTube videos.

A visit to the Spookstock website reveals a parody of the original Woodstock logo, a password box and nothing else. Spookstocks have been held at a warehouse in Springfield, Va., and a farm in Loudoun County, Va. Previous attendees have included actors Robert DeNiro and Harvey Keitel. Kelton says he's constantly fending off invitation requests and adds somewhat proudly that he has never extended an invitation to an active politician.

The guests of honor are a few dozen young beneficiaries — college seniors or recent graduates who have had their entire university education paid for by one of the foundations.

Kelton said the only networking that's allowed is among the young beneficiaries. The weekend serves as an informal job fair for the new graduates if they want to pursue a career in defense or intelligence.

The event has grown into a weekend of activities. In addition to tours of Washington and CIA headquarters for the young beneficiaries, corporate sponsors can pay extra for a day of pseudo-special-operations training.

Although Spookstock is relatively new, the charitable foundations that it benefits are much older. The early version of what would develop into the Special Operations Warrior Foundation was created in the wake of Operation Eagle Claw — the 1980 attempt to rescue the 52 hostages held in the U.S. Embassy in Tehran. The operation was aborted by President Jimmy Carter and resulted in the deaths of eight servicemen, leaving behind a total of 17 children.

"Senior leaders at the time passed the hat" to help those children, said retired Maj. Gen. Clay Hutmacher, the former director of operations for U.S. Special Operations Command. But the experience led to the creation of what would become the foundation.

Trump given week to decide if he wants lawyers at hearings

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The chairman of the House Judiciary Committee asked President Donald Trump on Friday to say whether he'll send his attorneys to participate in impeachment proceedings before the panel.

Rep. Jerrold Nadler also is asking Republicans on his committee which witnesses they plan to ask permission to subpoena.

The letters from the New York Democrat came as the House impeachment probe enters a new phase with a hearing next week on whether Trump's actions might constitute impeachable offenses.

Two weeks of Intelligence Committee hearings produced a mountain of testimony but didn't seem to move the needle on Capitol Hill, where not a single House Republican supported establishing the chamber's impeachment process.

Nadler instructed Trump and top panel Republican Doug Collins of Georgia to respond by the end of next week. The Judiciary Committee meets Wednesday in an informational hearing to examine the "constitutional grounds for presidential

impeachment" and could move some time after that to hearings where witnesses testify about Trump's actions with Ukraine.

The intelligence panel is slated to issue a report of its findings next week that are intended to form the basis of hearings at the Judiciary Committee, which would be responsible for drafting any articles of impeachment for a vote by the full House.

The panel can also seek further testimony. Nadler can deny witnesses sought by Republicans, who are likely to want subpoenas compelling testimony from Hunter Biden and the anonymous intelligence community whistleblower whose complaint sparked the impeachment proceedings.

At issue in the impeachment probe is whether Trump abused his office by pressing Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to investigate the Bidens and baseless allegations that Ukraine interfered with the 2016 election.

Hunter Biden served on the board of a Ukrainian energy company when his father, then-Vice President Joe Biden, had some responsibility for the Obama administration's Ukraine policy.

Biden launches bus tour in Iowa

Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa — Joe Biden kicked off an eight-day bus tour across Iowa on Saturday with a message: Reports of his demise in the nation's first presidential caucus state have been greatly exaggerated.

Biden's aides acknowledge that he must sharpen his pitch ahead of the Feb. 3 caucuses that launch Democrats' 2020 voting. Yet the former vice president's advisers reject any characterization of the 18-county swing as a campaign reset, even with polls showing that Biden's standing in Iowa has slipped in recent months.

They instead frame the extended trip as an effort to demonstrate wide appeal and harden support across a Democratic electorate whose top priority — even beyond intense intraparty debates on health care, a wealth tax and other issues — is defeating President Donald Trump. And conversations with his top advisers and supporters reveal a quiet confidence that the 77-year-old candidate retains a broad base of support and is well-situated to recover lost ground.

Iowa polls suggest Biden — still a front-runner nationally — is in a jumble near the top, with South Bend, Ind., Mayor Pete Buttigieg appearing to hold a narrow lead over the former vice president and Sens. Elizabeth Warren, 70, and Bernie Sanders, 78. The senators have animated the party's left flank, while Buttigieg, 37, joins Biden in Democrats' moderate lane but calling for generational change.

Two other key Democratic constituencies also are in play in Iowa, even if they aren't the dominant forces they are in other states: organized labor and minority voters.

Republicans use impeachment hearings to push voters their way

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Republicans aim to use the House drive toward impeaching President Donald Trump to whittle down Democrats' majority by dislodging vulnerable incumbents from swing districts loaded with moderate voters.

It could work, especially in Democratic-held districts Trump carried in 2016 with throngs of independent voters who polls shows are closely divided over his removal. Or it could flop, in an era when news zooms by so swiftly that today's concerns may be eclipsed in 11 months and many people are more focused on pocketbook issues such as health care costs.

"It will be part of the mosaic, but hardly the overriding issue," GOP pollster Whit Ayres predicted about impeachment's impact next November. "It will have faded by then and it will

also have simply reinforced the preexisting attitudes and made them more intense."

What's clear is that for now, Republicans are wielding impeachment mostly as an offensive weapon and Democrats are generally playing defense or changing the subject as 2020 congressional races rev up. House Democrats will be defending their 233-197 majority, with four vacancies. Republicans will try preserving their 53-47 Senate control.

Since late September, Republicans and their allies have spent \$8 million on impeachment-related TV ads aimed at House members, according to Advertising Analytics, a non-partisan firm that examines political spending. That's triple the sum spent by Democrats and their supporters.

While Democrats are favored to retain House control,

the early blitz of GOP attacks has prompted them to protect their targeted members.

House Majority Forward, an outside group tied to top House Democrats, has spent nearly \$2 million defending 14 Democratic incumbents. All but three are freshmen from Trump-won districts.

After an initial uptick in support for ousting Trump over his efforts to pressure Ukraine to seek dirt on his Democratic political rivals, voters' views have jelled.

About 9 in 10 Democrats support removing Trump and similar shares of Republicans back him, while independents are roughly evenly divided. Trump seems certain to be impeached, or found worthy of removal, by the Democratic-led House but likely acquitted by the GOP-majority Senate and kept in office.

PG&E says blackouts limited Calif. wildfires

Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — The nation's largest utility said Friday that its distribution lines haven't sparked any major wildfires since it began shutting off power to Northern California customers during periods of high fire risk.

However, Pacific Gas & Electric is not ruling out the possibility that failed transmission equipment may have started a fire north of San Francisco that damaged or destroyed more than 400 structures.

Authorities have not determined what sparked that blaze last month in Sonoma County, but the utility has said it had a problem at a transmission tower near the site where the fire started. PG&E said in

a court filing Friday that it is not aware of similar vulnerable equipment elsewhere.

PG&E has said it shut off power to distribution lines to prevent wildfires, but left electricity flowing through what it believed were less vulnerable transmission lines.

Distribution lines carry power to homes, while transmission lines move it from a power plant.

"In 2019, there have been no fatalities and no structures destroyed in any wildfire that may have been caused by PG&E distribution lines," the company said.

PG&E has acknowledged its equipment caused a fire last year that killed 85 people and burned nearly 19,000 structures, nearly destroying the Sierra Nevada foothills

community of Paradise.

PG&E has said it could potentially be held liable for 21 wildfires in 2017 that killed 44 people and destroyed 8,900 buildings.

The PG&E statement Friday "sets the bar unbelievably low, if that's the standard now: 'We didn't kill anybody,'" said Mindy Spatt, spokeswoman for The Utility Reform Network, a consumer advocacy group.

The utility has faced scathing criticism for shutting off power to millions of people for days at a time to avoid more fire tragedies. It said Friday that "the sole focus" of the blackouts is to reduce wildfire risk; that it recognizes the hardships they cause; and the company is working to minimize the impact of future shutoffs.

Elderly join Hong Kong youth in unity rally

Associated Press

HONG KONG — Hundreds of silver-haired activists joined young Hong Kong protesters for a unity rally Saturday, vowing that their monthslong movement will not fade away until there is greater democracy in the Chinese territory.

The rally at a park downtown was among several peaceful gatherings by protesters this week to keep up pressure on the government amid a lull in violence following a local election victory by the pro-democracy bloc and the gaining of U.S. support for their cause.

A local boys' band belted out songs to tell protesters that "the whole Hong Kong is supporting you."

Speakers reminded the crowd that it wasn't time to celebrate and that the fight

for real autonomy must persist.

The protesters are angry over creeping Chinese interference in Hong Kong that they say is eroding their rights promised when the former British colony returned to Chinese rule in 1997.

"The government wants us to desert the front-liners and young protesters, but we will stick with them," rally organizer Tam Kwok-sun, 64, said to loud cheers from the crowd. "Sometimes their actions are violent and aggressive, but we are more unhappy with the government's behavior."

Since the unrest broke out in June, protesters have disrupted traffic, smashed public facilities and pro-China shops, and hurled gasoline bombs in pitched battles with riot police who have responded with volleys of tear gas and water cannons.

The occupation of several universities by protesters last month after fiery clashes with police capped one of the most violent chapters in the turmoil, which has contributed to the city's first recession in a decade.

Hong Kong's leader, Carrie Lam, has appealed for the current calm to continue but has refused to bow to protesters' demands, which include free elections for her post and the legislature as well as an independent probe into alleged police brutality.

"It's still a very early stage of the revolution," a masked activist, who gave her name as Mai, 26, said Saturday. "People are tired physically and mentally, so we are waiting for the right moment for a fightback."

Hong Kong police have arrested 5,890 people as a result of the protests.

France summons Turkish envoy over jab at Macron

Associated Press

PARIS — The French government summoned the Turkish ambassador Friday to seek explanations after his president described French President Emmanuel Macron as "brain dead."

Ahead of a NATO summit next week that both men will attend, tensions have mounted around Turkey's military operation in Syria, and its role within the trans-Atlantic defense alliance, which is also a member of the fight against Islamic State.

Macron, complaining of a U.S. leadership vacuum, recently lamented the "brain death" of NATO and says the allies need

"a wake-up call." And on Thursday, he reiterated criticism of Turkey's operation in northeast Syria against Kurdish fighters who were crucial in the international fight against ISIS extremists.

"I respect the security interests of our Turkish ally ... but one can't say that we are allies and demand solidarity, and on the other hand, present allies with a fait accompli by a military intervention which jeopardizes the action of the coalition against IS," Macron said at a meeting with the NATO chief, Jens Stoltenberg.

The comments angered Turkey's leadership and prompted President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to shoot back Friday: "You should

get checked whether you're brain dead."

"Kicking Turkey out of NATO or not, how is that up to you? Do you have the authority to make such a decision?" Erdogan asked, characterizing Macron as "inexperienced."

Turkey also criticized Macron for agreeing to talks with a Syrian Kurd politician whom Ankara considers an extremist.

The French Foreign Ministry said in a statement that Ambassador Ismail Hakki Musa was summoned Friday to explain "unacceptable statements ... that have no place in Turkish-French relations and cannot substitute for the necessary dialogue between the two countries."

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Man ordered to take down Confederate flag

CT PLAINVILLE — A Connecticut man faces charges for allegedly using a Confederate flag to harass his African American neighbors.

Prosecutor Brian Preleski said the conflict between the Plainville family and Anthony Esposito, 49, came to a head when he draped himself in the Confederate flag and ran up and down his driveway while the neighbors' 12-year-old daughter waited for the school bus.

The Hartford Courant reported that a Confederate flag was still flying at Esposito's house after a judge ordered no such flag be flown within 250 yards of the neighbors' property.

'Rumors of War' statue moves to new home

VA RICHMOND — A monumental bronze statue that mimics one of Virginia's most prominent Confederate monuments has a new home in Richmond.

The Richmond Times-Dispatch reported artist Kehinde Wiley's "Rumors of War" will be permanently installed Dec. 10 at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.

The statue depicts a young black male dressed in streetwear mounted atop a horse and has been on display in Times Square since its unveiling there in September.

The 29-foot-high work originated when Wiley saw Confederate Gen. J.E.B. Stuart's statue on Monument Avenue. Wiley is known for his paintings of black Americans and his commissioned portrait of President Barack Obama, displayed at the National Portrait Gallery.

Kidney transplant went to the wrong patient

NJ CAMDEN — A New Jersey hospital said a kidney meant for one patient was mistakenly transplanted into another patient with the same name who was farther down the priority list.

Virtua Health said the Nov. 18 operation on a 51-year-old at Virtua Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital was successful, but officials then discovered that the patient was transplanted out of priority order because "unusually, the individual who should have received the organ has the same name and is of similar age."

Virtua Health said the error was reported to state health officials and the Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network, and the patient who should have received the kidney also underwent a successful transplant Nov. 24.

Art museum: Spalding House on sale for \$15M

HI HONOLULU — The Honolulu Museum of Art has put its Spalding House property on the market for \$15 million.

The Honolulu Star-Advertiser reported Elite Pacific Properties announced the opening of the sale.

Honolulu Academy of Arts founder Anna Rice Cooke built Spalding House in 1925 as a residential property, naming it Nuumealani, or Heavenly Terrace.

Cooke's daughter Alice Spalding acquired it in 1934 and in 1968 the property was purchased by the Honolulu Academy of Arts, the previous name of the art museum.

Man yells 'chemical warfare' in hospital ER

CT NEW HAVEN — Authorities said a Connecticut hospital's emergency room was evacuated when a man took a towel out of a backpack and started yelling "chemical warfare."

Police said the man was acting irrationally when he walked into the Yale New Haven Hospital emergency room.

Rick Fontana, director of the New Haven Office of Emergency Management, said 35 people were evacuated and three — two hospital employees and a police officer — who made contact with the towel were decontaminated as a precaution.

The man left the scene and remains at large.

Roadside zoo ordered to remove all animals

IA MANCHESTER — A judge ordered that bears, mountain lions, a camel, and other exotic animals be removed from an eastern Iowa roadside zoo.

In a ruling, District Court Judge Monica Wittig found the Cricket Hollow Zoo near Manchester to be a nuisance and that the exotic animals at the site must be placed at accredited sanctuaries or zoos.

Four plaintiffs sued to have the animals removed and the zoo owned by Pam and Tom Sellner closed. Pam Sellner had operated the zoo since 2002 despite repeated complaints that animals were mistreated.

During the trial, the judge toured the zoo and her ruling described improperly cared for goats and rams, bears that were "a very sad sight to see" and a baboon that was "the saddest and scariest" animal at the zoo.

Police to monitor tacky lights tour

VA RICHMOND — Police in suburban Richmond said they have plans to deal with some of the negative side effects from one of the area's most popular Christmas traditions: tacky lights tours.

The over-the-top holiday displays draw lines of cars, buses and limos. The vehicles can snarl traffic, and neighbors have also complained about drunken and disorderly conduct, including tour participants urinating on lawns after too much partying.

Henrico County police told the Richmond Times-Dispatch the department will be sending officers into congested neighborhoods on bicycles and on foot to patrol.

Hikers find wedding ring on mountain

NH MANCHESTER — A man's plea to find his lost wedding ring on a 4,000-foot snow-covered mountain in New Hampshire was answered by a couple of hikers — and a metal detector.

WMUR-TV reported Bill Giguere of Massachusetts recently lost the gold band on Mount Hancock. Giguere put out a plea to a hiking group.

That piqued Tom Gately's interest, although he had doubts about finding the ring along the 10-mile loop trail Giguere hiked. Giguere said the most likely spot was at a lookout where he changed gloves.

Gately and fellow hiker Brendan Cheever set out with a metal detector.

Gately said: "It beeped and he's, like, 'I think I found it,' and everybody's, like, 'What?' and he just started scratching in the snow. There it was!"

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STARS AND STRIPES®

Cavs end 15-year drought against rival

Associated Press

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. — Even with a nine-point lead and less than a minute on the clock, Bryce Perkins was not ready to celebrate Virginia finally breaking its Commonwealth Cup drought.

It was only a year ago, in his first experience with Virginia's annual rivalry game against Virginia Tech, Perkins botched a handoff in overtime that allowed the Hokies to extend their dominance in the series after a wild finish.

"I needed to see zeroes because I remembered last year," Perkins said Friday after Virginia ended a 15-game losing streak to 23rd-ranked Virginia Tech and earned the Cavaliers their first trip to the Atlantic Coast Conference champion-

ship game with a 39-30 victory.

Perkins was a huge part of why Virginia (9-3, 6-2) won, putting up 475 yards of offense. Brian Delaney kicked a go-ahead 48-yard field goal with 1:23 left in the fourth quarter and the Cavaliers sealed it with a defensive score, causing fans to spill onto the field in a wild celebration.

"I was the last play that ultimately ended up losing us the game. I had to sit with that all year and it hurt, so this game I really wanted to go out there and be aggressive and just give everything I could for the team and not to let them down again," Perkins said.

Perkins ran for two long touchdowns and passed for another for the Cavaliers became the seventh different winner in

as many years to win the Coastal Division. Delaney also kicked a 25-yard field goal for Virginia, and his last kick made up for a missed extra point early.

"How fitting after a missed extra point early that I thought was going to haunt us," Virginia coach Bronco Mendenhall said.

Hendon Hooker ran for one touchdown and threw for another for the Hokies (8-4, 5-3), who came in having won six of seven games to surge into championship contention. A rallying defense and Hooker's steady play drove the surge, but both came up short against Virginia.

The Cavaliers' winning drive began with Noah Taylor's interception of Hooker at the Virginia 35. Virginia moved

steadily downfield, not facing a third-down play until it was third-and-15 from the Hokies' 40. Perkins hit Tavares Kelly for 9 yards before Delaney's kick.

The history of the series made the crowd cautiously optimistic — like Perkins — until the Hokies' ensuing possession. The Cavaliers sacked Hooker on three straight plays. Mandy Alonso had the last, forcing a fumble that Eli Hanback recovered in the end zone, finally giving the Virginia faithful enough cushion to celebrate the end of the Hokies' decade-and-a-half of domination.

"We got in a situation there at the end of the game where everybody knows we're throwing the ball. That's not our strength," Hokies coach Justin Fuente said.

Memphis outlasts Cincinnati, prepares for rematch

Associated Press

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — Brady White threw for 233 yards and two touchdowns and No. 17 Memphis beat 18th-ranked Cincinnati 34-24 on Friday for the Tigers' third straight American Athletic Conference West title and the right to host the league championship — and the Bearcats again — next week.

This will be the first time that the Tigers (11-1, 7-1, No. 18 CFP) will host a conference title game in program history.

And the league championship will be a rematch between these teams after Memphis snapped a nine-game winning streak by the East Division champs. Cincinnati (10-2, 7-1, No. 19 CFP) hadn't lost since being routed by Ohio State on Sept. 7.

Joseph Dorceus and Bryce Huff had two sacks apiece, and Memphis finished with five. The Tigers came up with three turnovers, including an interception by Sanchez Blake Jr. with 1:35 left.

Memphis also forced the Bearcats into a three-and-out after Ahmad Gardner intercepted White with 7:49 left with the Tigers up only 27-24. Memphis led only 20-17 when it put together its longest drive, going 83 yards over nine plays capped by a flea flicker. Patrick Taylor took the handoff, handed to Kedarian Jones who flipped the ball to White, and he hit Damonte Coxie for a 46-yard TD with 13:22 left.

Antonio Gibson scored on a 29-yard TD run with 3:16 left for the final margin for Memphis.

No. 19 Iowa 27, Nebraska 24: Keith Duncan kicked a 48-yard field goal with a second left to lift the visiting Hawkeyes and keep the Cornhuskers out of the postseason for a third consecutive season.

Iowa (9-3, 6-3 Big Ten) overcame a sluggish second half offensively to beat Nebraska (5-7, 3-6) for a fifth straight year and second year in a row on a late field goal. Last year, they won on a 41-yarder as time expired.

Iowa, which had its 14-point lead wiped out in the third

quarter, started its final possession at its 26 with 32 seconds left. Stanley had a long pass to Nico Ragaini overturned to incomplete on video review, but then completed a pair of 22-yard passes to Ihmir Smith-Marsette and Sam LaPorta to bring on the reliable Duncan.

The Huskers called two timeouts before Duncan drilled the winner down the middle.

No. 20 Boise State 31, Colorado State 24: Jaylon Henderson accounted for three scores, defensive tackle David Moa came up with a big late sack and the visiting Broncos beat the Rams to finish undefeated in Mountain West Conference play for the first time.

Boise State (11-1, 8-0, No. 20 CFP) will host Hawaii next week in the Mountain West title game.

Henderson ran for a short score early in the fourth to give the Broncos breathing room. He also threw two TD passes, giving him eight over the past three games as he fills in for banged-up starter Hank Bachmeier and backup Chase Cord.

Patrick O'Brien threw for

289 yards and two TDs for the Rams (4-8, 3-5). They are 0-9 against Boise State.

No. 22 Appalachian State 48, Troy 13: Zac Thomas passed for 326 yards and four touchdowns and rushed for a fifth score to lead the visiting Mountaineers past the Trojans in the regular-season finale.

The win assured Appalachian State (11-1, 7-1 Sun Belt Conference) of hosting the league title game against Louisiana next Saturday.

Thomas, Darrynton Evans, Thomas Hennigan and others all delivered big plays for the Mountaineers, who reached the end zone on each of their first five possessions against Troy (5-7, 3-5).

Thomas was 28-for-34 passing with his final attempt a 25-yard scoring strike to Evans to start the fourth quarter. He had a 12-yard touchdown run.

Evans also scored on runs of 52 and 9 yards and gained 82 yards. Hennigan gained 140 yards on 11 catches and Malik Williams caught two short touchdown passes.

Michigan routs Zags for Atlantis title

Associated Press

PARADISE ISLAND, Bahamas — Juwan Howard was standing at the center of his Michigan team posing for on-court pictures when he finally grabbed the hefty Battle 4 Atlantis championship trophy from the table in front of him.

The first-year coach tipped it backward to peek at the front and the large seashell on its base, then used both hands to hoist it above his head with a celebratory scream.

“It’s gratifying to be able to hold up that trophy and say, ‘You know what? All that sacrifice we put through, all the hard work we put in, it was well worth it,’” Howard said.

There was no arguing with the results, either. His Wolverines again overwhelmed a high-

ly ranked opponent with their flowing offense to beat No. 8 Gonzaga 82-64 in Friday’s title game. And that closed a three-game run that saw Michigan go from arriving in the Bahamas as an afterthought in an eight-team tournament featuring four AP Top 25 teams to commanding everyone’s attention.

“Well, I’m sure we’re on the map now,” Howard said with a big grin.

Jon Teske added 19 points, 15 rebounds and four blocks as the tournament’s most valuable player for the Wolverines (7-0).

Yet the story was more about the way Michigan won the title than any stats. The Wolverines handled Iowa State in Wednesday’s opener, then led No. 6 North Carolina by 24 at one point during Thursday’s win before beating the Zags (8-1).

And that secured a pair of early marquee wins for Howard, the longtime NBA player and member of Michigan’s “Fab Five” a quarter-century ago.

This one had a similar feeling to the UNC win, too, with Michigan’s offense kicking into a hot-shooting gear midway through the second half to take control and build a huge lead.

“We’re having fun together,” Teske said. “We’re sharing the ball. We know where we’re going to be on the court at all times.”

Michigan led just 38-36 when the shots started falling from just about everywhere: a three-pointer from Zavier Simpson, two drives from freshman Franz Wagner, a three from Livers and two more from David DeJulius.

It was a burst of 10 straight

scoring possessions — with Michigan moving the ball to get good looks on just about every one — that put the Wolverines up 62-43 midway through the second half.

Gonzaga never got the lead below double figures again.

Killian Tillie scored 20 points for the battered Bulldogs, who dealt with numerous injury concerns over the three-day tournament. Gonzaga just couldn’t keep up with the Wolverines and finished the game shooting 40%.

“Every time we made a mental breakdown, they scored,” Gonzaga coach Mark Few said. “They literally made us pay on every one of our assignments that we screwed up — a switch or we screwed up a coverage. And they made us pay, so they deserve a lot of credit for that.”

College basketball roundup

Free throws help No. 6 Tar Heels hold off No. 11 Ducks

Associated Press

PARADISE ISLAND, Bahamas — Cole Anthony hit a driving layup and four key free throws in the final 64 seconds to help No. 6 North Carolina hold off No. 11 Oregon in the third-place game at the Battle 4 Atlantis.

The freshman point guard had a baseline drive past Will Richardson with the Tar Heels protecting a one-point lead. He then hit four straight free throws to protect the lead in a game that went down to the final seconds.

Senior Brandon Robinson followed with the final free throws with 0.8 seconds left to seal it, giving the Tar Heels (6-1) a needed bounce-back effort after Thursday’s loss to Michigan.

Anthony finished with 19 points despite sitting for a chunk of the second half after picking up his fourth foul, to help guide the Tar Heels to the finish, though it was fellow

freshman Armando Bacot with a strong overall performance that led the way.

Bacot had 23 points, 12 rebounds and six blocks for UNC.

Payton Pritchard had 19 points to lead Oregon (6-2).

No. 1 Duke 83, Winthrop 70: Freshman Matthew Hurt scored a season-high 20 points, Joey Baker added a career-high 16 and the host Blue Devils beat the Eagles to bounce back from their stunning loss to Stephen F. Austin.

No. 2 Louisville 71, Western Kentucky 54: Jordan Nwora scored 25 points as the host Cardinals defeated the Hilltoppers to remain unbeaten and make their case for the No. 1 ranking.

No. 5 Maryland 80, Harvard 73: Anthony Cowan Jr. scored 17 of his 20 points in the second half to help the Terrapins overcome another slow start to remain unbeaten, topping the Crimson in the semifinals of the Orlando Invitational at

Lake Buena Vista, Fla..

No. 9 Kentucky 69, UAB 58: Nick Richards and EJ Montgomery each scored 16 points and combined for 17 rebounds, helping the host Wildcats beat the Blazers.

No. 10 Ohio State 90, Morgan State 57: Andre Wesson scored 19 points to help the host Buckeyes rout the Bears.

Creighton 83, No. 12 Texas Tech 76 (OT): At Las Vegas, Marcus Zegarowski scored a career-high 32 points on 12-for-18 shooting, and the Blue Jays beat the Red Raiders in overtime.

No. 13 Seton Hall 84, Iowa State 76: Myles Powell scored 19 of his 24 points after halftime to help the Pirates beat the Cyclones in the fifth-place game at the Battle 4 Atlantis in the Bahamas.

No. 14 Arizona 92, Penn State 82: Nico Mannion scored 24 points, Chase Jeter added 19 and the Wildcats advanced to the championship game of the Wooden Legacy in Anaheim,

Calif., with a win over the Quakers.

Saint Mary’s 81, No. 15 Utah State 73: Jordan Ford scored 22 of his 27 points in the second half and sparked a run of 11 straight points late in the game to lead the host Gaels over the Aggies.

Florida State 60, No. 17 Tennessee 57: Devin Vassell scored 13 points and made a key steal and pair of free throws in the final minute as the Seminoles upended the Volunteers in the Emerald Coast Classic in Niceville, Fla..

Purdue 59, No. 20 VCU 56: Eric Hunter Jr. and Jahaad Proctor each scored 12 points, including crucial free throws in the final two minutes, as the Boilermakers upset the Rams in the Emerald Coast Classic.

No. 24 Florida 73, Marshall 67: Ques Glover scored 14 points, Keyontae Johnson added 13 and the host Gators rallied from an eight-point halftime deficit to beat the Thundering Herd..

NBA roundup

Hornets take both of home-and-home

Associated Press

DETROIT — Langston Galloway's shot from near mid-court rimmed out at the buzzer, and the Charlotte Hornets held on for a 110-107 victory over the Detroit Pistons on Friday night.

Charlotte completed a home-and-home sweep of the Pistons this week. Detroit must be wondering what it has to do to beat the Hornets. Charlotte edged the Pistons 109-106 earlier in the month and 102-101 on Wednesday night.

This matchup went down to the wire again. The Hornets rallied from an eight-point deficit in the final quarter and led by three with 8.9 seconds left. Detroit inbounded the ball, and Luke Kennard missed a three-pointer from near the top of the key. Galloway was able to run

down the loose ball, and his last-ditch shot looked on line, but it didn't go in.

P.J. Washington scored 26 points for Charlotte, and Terry Rozier added 23. The Hornets were without center Cody Zeller because of a left hip injury.

Derrick Rose led the Pistons with 23 points.

Spurs 107, Clippers 97: LaMarcus Aldridge and Derrick White each had 17 points, and host San Antonio beat Kawhi Leonard and Los Angeles.

Bucks 119, Cavaliers 110: Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 11 of his 33 points in the fourth quarter and Milwaukee won at Cleveland.

Raptors 90, Magic 83: Norman Powell scored a career-best 33 points as visiting Toronto won its sixth straight game.

Nets 112, Celtics 107: Spencer Dinwiddie had 32 points and 11 assists while Kyrie Irving was again unable to face his former team, and host Brooklyn beat Boston to split a home-and-home series.

Heat 122, Warriors 105: Goran Dragic scored 20 points, Tyler Herro added 19 and Miami remained perfect at home.

76ers 101, Knicks 95: Joel Embiid had 27 points and 17 rebounds, James Ennis III scored 18 of his 20 points in the second half, and Philadelphia overcame a sluggish start to win at New York.

Jazz 103, Grizzlies 94: Bojan Bogdanovic scored 16 of his 33 points in the fourth quarter, helping Utah pull away at Memphis.

Pacers 105, Hawks 104 (OT): Jeremy Lamb scored 20

points, T.J. Warren hit a go-ahead three-pointer and host Indiana outlasted Trae Young and Atlanta.

Thunder 109, Pelicans 104: Dennis Schroder scored 25 points, including 12 in the fourth quarter, and had seven assists to help host Oklahoma City beat New Orleans.

Mavericks 120, Suns 113: Luka Doncic tied a career high with 42 points, Tim Hardaway Jr. added 26 and Dallas won at Phoenix.

Lakers 125, Wizards 103: Anthony Davis had 26 points and 13 rebounds, and LeBron James had 23 points and 11 assists in host Los Angeles' 10th consecutive victory.

Trail Blazers 107, Bulls 103: Carmelo Anthony had 23 points and 11 rebounds and host Portland downed Chicago.

NHL roundup

Orlov's overtime goal pushes Capitals past Lightning

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Dmitry Orlov scored 3:03 into overtime, and the Washington Capitals rallied to beat the Tampa Bay Lightning 4-3 on Friday.

Orlov, Jakub Vrana and Evgeny Kuznetsov each had a goal and an assist for Washington, which trailed 3-1 after two periods. Alex Ovechkin tied the game with his team-leading 17th goal 11:36 into the third.

The Capitals went 2-for-2 on the power play and closed out a three-game homestand with five points.

Brayden Point scored his 100th career goal and had an assist for Tampa Bay. Nikita Kucherov recorded three assists for the second time this season, but also picked up a penalty that helped set up Ovechkin's goal.

Blues 3, Stars 1: Ryan O'Reilly broke a tie 18 seconds after Dallas pulled even, and

visiting St. Louis extended its lead in the Central Division.

O'Reilly took a pass from Ivan Barbashev and beat Ben Bishop from the slot with 2:53 left in the third period. Barbashev added an empty-netter with 3 seconds remaining.

Jake Allen made 31 saves, stopping everything except Roope Hintz's shot 9 seconds after he came out of the penalty box with 3:11 to play.

Blue Jackets 5, Penguins 2: Gustav Nyquist scored three times to lead host Columbus to the victory.

Nick Foligno had two goals for the Blue Jackets, who won for the fifth time in seven games. Joonas Korpi had 29 saves, making several good stops with Pittsburgh pressing in the third period. It was Nyquist's second career hat trick. It was the first hat trick for Columbus since Boone Jenner scored three times in a 7-4 vic-

tory over Boston on March 12.

Predators 3, Hurricanes 0: Nashville's Pekka Rinne made 31 saves for his third shutout of the season and No. 58 for his career.

Rocco Grimaldi, Calle Jarnkrok and Austin Watson scored for the Predators, who broke a six-game losing streak against host Carolina.

Golden Knights 2, Coyotes 1 (SO): Vegas' Alex Tuch scored in regulation and added the shootout winner over visiting Arizona.

Golden Knights goaltender Malcolm Subban stopped 35 shots in his third straight start, including two monster saves in the final 12 seconds of regulation, and two more in overtime.

Avalanche 5, Blackhawks 2: Nathan MacKinnon had a goal and three assists, sending Colorado to the road win.

Bruins 3, Rangers 2 (OT): David Krejci scored 1:40 into

overtime, David Pastrnak scored his league-leading 24th goal and host Boston earned its sixth straight win.

Jets 3, Ducks 0: Connor Hellebuyck made 24 saves for his second shutout, leading Winnipeg to a win at Anaheim.

Sharks 4, Kings 1: Martin Jones made 33 saves for host San Jose, and Noah Gregor scored his first career NHL goal.

Wild 7, Senators 2: Defenseman Jared Spurgeon had a goal and two assists, and host Minnesota scored three goals in a 4:13 span of the second period.

Sabres 6, Maple Leafs 4: Jack Eichel had two goals and an assist, powering host Buffalo to the victory.

Flyers 6, Red Wings 1: Sean Couturier and Scott Laughton each had a goal and an assist, and host Philadelphia earned its third straight victory.