

Experts back plan for B-52s in Australia

By SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

A plan to rotate U.S. B-52 bombers to Australia's Northern Territory shows the Pentagon has found a useful alternative to basing aircraft on Guam, according to security experts.

The plan for dry-season bomber rotations at Royal Australian Air Force Base Tindal south of Darwin was reported Monday by Australian public broadcaster ABC.

Basing bombers in Australia would disperse U.S. forces across the Indo-Pacific region, said Ian Chong, an associate professor of political science at the National University of Singapore.

"That keeps a potential adversary guessing and perhaps discourages them from provocation," he told Stars and Stripes in an email Monday. "Of course, with B-52s, there is the nuclear option as well."

The Pentagon in April budgeted \$14.4 million for the squadron's operations and maintenance facilities at Tindal, ABC reported.

New facilities, including a large parking apron able to accommodate B-52s, were under construction at the base in September. U.S.-funded airfield infrastructure at Tin-

dal supports the rotational presence of a range of U.S. aircraft, Air Force Lt. Col. Martin Meiners, a Department of Defense spokesman, told Stars and Stripes by email Tuesday.

"The [squadron operations] facility is required to support strategic operations and to run multiple 15-day training exercises during the Northern Territory dry season for deployed B-52 squadrons," said the ABC report, which cited unspecified American documents.

The Northern Territory's dry season spans the Southern Hemisphere's cooler months, from May to October.

U.S. bombers, including B-52s, have been visiting Australia since the early 1980s and training in Australia since 2005, the Australian Defence Department said in a statement emailed to Stars and Stripes on Monday.

Last year, both countries endorsed rotational deployments of U.S. aircraft of all types to Australia, according to the Australian statement. Future B-52 bomber rotations to the country would be consistent with both countries' longstanding objectives, it said.

That does not sit well with China, the ris-

ing power in the western Pacific and the "most consequential" challenger identified in the recently released U.S. National Defense Strategy.

"Such a move by the US and Australia escalates regional tensions, gravely undermines regional peace and stability, and may trigger an arms race in the region," China's Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian told reporters Monday, according to a transcript of his remarks on the ministry website.

The U.S. and Australia share concerns about Chinese aggression in the Taiwan Strait and South and East China Seas and efforts to build influence in the South Pacific.

Guam provides a mid-ocean platform for U.S. air power. Since 2004, Air Force bombers such as the B-1B Lancer, B-52 Stratofortress and B-2 Spirit have been frequent visitors to Guam. But China has the ability to strike U.S. forces on Guam and in the Far East with everything from ballistic missiles to maneuverable cruise and hypersonic missiles, then-Indo-Pacific Command chief Adm. Phil Davidson warned in September 2020.

Positioning B-52s in Australia gives U.S. airpower added survivability, Chong said.

AP: China fishing fleet defied US in high-sea standoff

Associated Press

This summer, as China fired missiles into the sea off Taiwan to protest House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to the island, a much different kind of geopolitical standoff was taking shape in another corner of the Pacific Ocean.

Thousands of miles away, a heavily-armed U.S. Coast Guard cutter sailed up to a fleet of a few hundred Chinese squid-fishing boats not far from Ecuador's Galapagos Islands. Its mission: inspect the vessels for any signs of illegal, unreported or unregulated fishing.

Boarding ships on the high seas is a perfectly legal, if little-used tool available to any sea power as part of the collective effort to protect the oceans' threatened fish stocks.

But in this case, the Chinese captains of several fishing boats did something unex-

pected. Three vessels sped away, one turning aggressively 90 degrees toward the Coast Guard cutter James, forcing the American vessel to take evasive action to avoid being rammed.

"For the most part they wanted to avoid us," said Coast Guard Lt. Hunter Stowes, the highest-ranking law enforcement officer on the James. "But we were able to maneuver effectively so that we were safe the entire time."

Still, the high-seas confrontation represented a potentially dangerous breach of international maritime protocol, one the United States sees as a troubling precedent since it happened on the Coast Guard's first-ever mission to counter illegal fishing in the eastern Pacific.

The Associated Press reconstructed details of the never-before-reported incident

from the Coast Guard and six U.S. non-military officials who spoke of the operation in greater detail but requested anonymity to avoid jeopardizing a multilateral process seeking to force China to sanction the vessels. While diplomats in China accused the Americans of acting improperly, they didn't provide their own detailed account.

The Coast Guard's unprecedented voyage was prompted by growing alarm from activists and governments in Latin America over the activities of China's distant water fishing fleet, the world's largest. Since 2009, the number of Chinese-flagged vessels spotted fishing in the south Pacific, sometimes for months at a time, has surged eightfold, to 476 last year. Meanwhile, the size of its squid catch has grown from 70,000 tons to 422,000 — a level of fishing that some scientists fear is unsustainable even for a resilient species.

A-10s deploy to Guam to keep foes guessing

By **WYATT OLSON**
Stars and Stripes

U.S. Air Force A-10 Thunderbolts arrived on Guam last week for a dynamic force employment operation that aims to foster unpredictability in overseas deployments, the service said in a news release Wednesday.

The attack planes, part of the 23rd Air Expeditionary Wing, flew from Moody Air Force Base, Ga., to Andersen Air Force Base.

"The United States is committed to being ready to execute missions quickly in unpredictable ways and rapidly respond to adversary moves within and across theaters of operation," the release said.

The Air Force did not disclose the exact number of A-10s de-

ployed to Guam. A photo posted on Andersen's Facebook page showed four of the aircraft — complete with their hallmark paintings of jagged teeth on their nose cones — lined up at the base.

Dynamic force employment "is designed as a way for Pacific Air Forces to exercise their ability to generate combat air power from dynamic force elements while continuing to move, maneuver and sustain these elements in geographically-separated and contested environments," the Facebook post stated.

The A-10, nicknamed "Warthog" for its aggressive maneuverability and those teeth, is designed for close air support of ground forces. It is highly effective

against tanks and other armored vehicles and can operate at low speeds and altitude.

The aircraft arrived about a week after the Air Force deployed an undisclosed number of B-1B bombers from South Dakota to Guam for a bomber task force mission.

Bomber task force missions are intended to demonstrate the B-1B's "ability to rapidly deploy anywhere, anytime, and provide lethal precision global strike options for combatant commanders," the Air Force said in an Oct. 21 news release.

The American territory of Guam is of growing importance to America's defense, according to the updated National Defense Strategy publicly released last

week.

"Guam is home to key regional power projection platforms and logistical nodes and is an essential operation base for U.S. efforts to maintain a free and open Indo-Pacific region," the document states. "Within the context of homeland defense, an attack on Guam or any other U.S. territory by any adversary will be considered a direct attack on the United States, and will be met with an appropriate response."

A \$1 billion effort to establish a comprehensive, integrated missile defense system for Guam is underway, an endeavor some lawmakers regard as urgent given North Korea's stepped-up missile testing and China's military ambitions in the region.

New commander touts strength in Indo-Pacific

By **MATTHEW M. BURKE**
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — The new commander of Marine Corps air power in the Pacific said the force has never been more lethal, though he aims to maintain peace in the region through deterrence and partnerships with allies.

Maj. Gen. Eric Austin took command of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing during a flight-line ceremony at Marine Corps Air Station Futenma on Okinawa on Aug. 12, with the risk of conflict between the West and its allies and regional provocateurs like North Korea and China at a 50-year high.

Since taking over the air wing, the Harrier pilot has visited its units at MCAS Futenma; at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, 25 miles south of Hiroshima; and Marine Corps Base Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii, to take stock of the wing's assets and direction, Aus-

tin told Stars and Stripes in his office at Camp Foster on Oct. 21.

"I think we've got an amazing and lethal force," he said. "The commandant has focused us on campaigning in a fashion that maintains a free and open Indo-Pacific and avoids us getting to what would really be a strategic failure, which would be a shoot-in match with China."

The 1st Marine Aircraft Wing is the aviation element of the III Marine Expeditionary Force and consists of approximately 7,000 Marines and sailors in three aircraft groups in Japan and Hawaii.

Austin arrived on Okinawa after directing combat development and integration at Marine Corps headquarters in Quantico, Va. A big supporter of Commandant Gen. David Berger's service-wide redesign and modernization push called Force Design 2030, Austin was tasked with developing recommendations that bring that concept to life.

Navy base installs wastewater filters for 'forever chemicals'

By **ALEX WILSON**
AND **HANA KUSUMOTO**
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — The U.S. Navy has finished installing filters at the wastewater treatment plant on this base on Tokyo Bay, less than a week after the Japanese government once again reported high levels of so-called "forever chemicals" there.

Eight granular activated carbon filters to further treat wastewater contaminated with PFOS and PFOA were fully operational Tuesday morning at Yokosuka, homeport of the U.S. 7th Fleet, base spokesman Randall Baucom told Stars and Stripes by email.

The filters were installed specifically to remove the chemical compounds that since May have shown up repeatedly in water-quality tests by the U.S. Navy and the South Kanto Defense Bureau.

"The U.S. Navy has worked hard to correct this situation. The

health and safety of our service members, civilians, their families, and the local community is our top priority," Baucom wrote.

The Navy's most recent round of testing on Sept. 29 found PFOA in concentrations of 12,900 parts per trillion in industrial wastewater, 258 times higher than the 50 parts per trillion limit imposed by the Japanese government, according to a Thursday news release from Yokosuka city.

PFOA and PFOS are found in firefighting foam, aircraft grease, water-repellent materials and other products that use fluorine chemicals. They may accumulate in the human body and persist for a long time, according to the Environmental Protection Agency, which refers to them as "forever chemicals."

Following the toxins' discovery in May, the base removed all firefighting foam containing the chemicals, Naval Forces Japan spokeswoman Cmdr. Katie Cerezo said on Sept. 16.

US military inspecting weapons in Ukraine

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A small number of U.S. military forces inside Ukraine have recently begun doing onsite inspections to ensure that Ukrainian troops are properly accounting for the Western-provided weapons they receive, a senior U.S. defense official told Pentagon reporters Monday.

The official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to provide a military update, would not say where the inspections are taking place or how close to the battlefronts the U.S. troops are getting. The official said U.S. personnel can't do inspections "close to the front lines," but said they are going where security conditions allow.

The official said there have been several inspections, and they are being done by the U.S. Defense attache and the U.S. Office of Defense Cooperation team that is in Kyiv. So far, the official said, Ukrainian officials have been transparent about the weapons' distribution and are supporting the inspections.

The effort is part of a broader U.S. campaign, announced last week by the State Department, meant to make sure that weapons provided to Ukraine don't end up in the hands of Russian troops, their proxies or other extremist groups.

Earlier this year, the United States said a small number of U.S. military troops had returned to the embassy in Kyiv to

do security and other tasks. U.S. President Joe Biden has ruled out any combat role for U.S. forces inside Ukraine.

U.S. officials have faced persistent questions from some members of Congress over how the administration is accounting for the billions of dollars in arms that have been sent to Ukraine over the past year. But the administration had been reluctant to detail its work on that front due to concerns about the state of the conflict and fears it might tip off would-be smugglers to potential evasion techniques.

The State Department plan includes short-, medium- and longer-term initiatives to bolster U.S. and Ukrainian over-

sight of transferred weapons, particularly more advanced missile systems and anti-aircraft devices, as well as to improve Ukraine's aviation and border security to combat the misuse of weapons and prevent possible arms trafficking.

The State Department said that so far, Ukraine's intense demand for weapons on the battlefield appears to be impeding black-market proliferation of small arms, portable air defense systems and anti-tank weapons such as Javelins. It said the main problem has been the seizure of weapons by Russian forces as they take ground, and warned Moscow can use them to develop countermeasures or conduct false-flag operations.

Children among several hurt in Chicago shooting

Associated Press

CHICAGO — As many as 15 people, including three children, were injured in a drive-by shooting on Halloween night that sent shots flying into a crowd along a Chicago street corner, police said.

Chicago Police Superintendent David Brown said the three juvenile victims are a 3-year-old, an 11-year-old and a 13-year-old. The others wounded by gunfire Monday night are adults ranging in age from their 30s to their 50s.

In addition, police said a woman fleeing from the shooting scene was struck by a vehicle as she crossed traffic. She was hospitalized in fair condition.

The Chicago Fire Department said it sent at least 10 ambulances to the scene in Chicago's Garfield Park neighborhood. Brown said the victims' conditions range from non-life threatening injuries to critical condition. No fatalities were immediately reported and po-

lice were waiting to interview the shooting victims after they received medical treatment.

Brown said the drive-by shooting happened around 9:30 p.m. and was over in a matter of seconds. It was captured on police surveillance video, which investigators are reviewing.

Preliminary information indicates there were at least two shooters seen on the video, firing indiscriminately into the crowd.

Community activist Andrew Holmes said the children shot during the incident are "just young."

"They're putting on an outfit just to enjoy the evening and then you got a clown that goes and discharges that weapon, bringing great bodily harm to these families," he told WGN-TV.

Investigators are trying to determine a motive and get a description of the car and those responsible, Brown said. No one was in custody.

Roberts delays Trump tax returns handover to House

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Chief Justice John Roberts on Tuesday put a temporary hold on the handover of former President Donald Trump's tax returns to a congressional committee.

Roberts' order gives the Supreme Court time to weigh the legal issues in Trump's emergency appeal to the high court, filed Monday.

Without court intervention, the tax returns could have been provided as early as Thursday by the Treasury Department to the Democratic-controlled House Ways and Means Committee.

Roberts gave the committee until Nov. 10 to respond. The chief justice handles emergency appeals from the nation's capital, where the fight over Trump's taxes has been going on since 2019.

Lower courts ruled that the committee has broad authority to obtain tax returns and rejected Trump's claims that it was overstepping.

If Trump can persuade the nation's highest court to intervene in this case, he could potentially delay a final decision until the start of the next Congress in January. If Republicans recapture control of the House in the fall election, they could drop the records request.

The temporary delay imposed by Roberts is the third such order issued by justices in recent days in cases related to Trump.

The court separately is weighing Sen. Lindsey Graham's emergency appeal to avoid having to testify before a Georgia grand jury that is investigating potential illegal interference by Trump and his allies in the 2020 election in the state.

Also before the court is an emergency appeal from Arizona Republican party chairwoman Kelli Ward. Its purpose is to prevent the handover of phone records to the House committee investigating the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection at the U.S. Capitol.

Israelis vote again amid political crisis

Associated Press

JERUSALEM — For the fifth time since 2019, Israelis were voting in national elections on Tuesday, hoping to break the political deadlock that has paralyzed the country for the past three-and-a-half years.

Again, the vote centered around former Premier Benjamin Netanyahu's fitness to lead while he faces corruption charges. And while polls predict another stalemate, Netanyahu is looking to the surging power of far-right lawmaker Itamar Ben-Gvir to propel him back to power.

Netanyahu's main rival is the man who helped oust him last year, the centrist caretaker Prime Minister Yair Lapid, who has warned of an emerging nationalist alliance if Netanyahu were to return to power.

"Vote for the state of Israel, and for the future of our children," Lapid said after casting his ballot in the upscale Tel Aviv neighborhood where he lives.

After he cast his vote in the West Bank settlement where he lives, Ben-Gvir promised that a vote for his party would bring about a "fully right-wing government" with Netanyahu as prime minister.

Ben-Gvir, who has been convicted for incitement for his anti-Arab rhetoric and has promised to deport Arab lawmakers, has seen his clout rise in the polls ahead of the vote and has demanded a key portfolio should Netanyahu be tapped to form a government.

With former allies and proteges refusing to sit under him while he is on trial, Netanyahu has been unable to form a viable majority government in the 120-seat Knesset, or parliament.

"I'm a little worried," Netanyahu said after voting. "I hope we end the day with a smile."

Netanyahu's opponents, an ideologically diverse constellation of parties, are equally

hamstrung in cobbling together the 61 seats needed to rule. That impasse has mired Israel in an unprecedented political crisis that has eroded Israelis' faith in their democracy, its institutions and political leaders.

"People are tired of instability, of the fact that the government is not delivering the goods," said Yohanan Plesner, a former legislator who now heads the Israel Democracy Institute, a Jerusalem think tank.

Election officials said that by noon Tuesday, turnout stood at 28.4%, which is nearly 3% higher than at the same time during last year's vote.

Buoyed by his followers' almost cult-like adoration, Netanyahu, 73, has rejected calls to step down by his opponents, who have said someone on trial for fraud, breach of trust and accepting bribes cannot govern. Netanyahu has denied wrongdoing, but embarrassing details from his ongoing trial repeatedly make front page news.

S. Korea officials admit blame in Halloween tragedy

Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — South Korean officials admitted responsibility and apologized Tuesday for failures in preventing and responding to a Halloween crowd surge that killed more than 150 people and left citizens shocked and angry.

The government is facing growing public scrutiny over whether the crush Saturday night in Seoul's Itaewon district, a popular nightlife neighborhood, could have been prevented and who should take responsibility for the country's worst disaster in years.

National police chief Yoon Hee Keun said an initial investigation found there were many urgent calls from citizens notifying authorities about the potential danger of the crowd gathering in Itaewon. He said police

officers who received the calls failed to handle them effectively.

"I feel a heavy responsibility (for the disaster) as the head of one of the related government offices," Yoon said in a televised news conference.

Yoon said police have launched an intense internal probe into the officers' handling of the emergency calls and other issues, such as the on-the-spot response to the crowd surge in Itaewon that night.

Separately, South Korea's interior minister, emergency office chief, Seoul mayor and the head of a ward office that includes the Itaewon neighborhood all offered public apologies.

Seoul Mayor Oh Se-hoon apologized deeply and wept and briefly halted his news

conference as he talked about the parent of a 20-year-old woman who was declared dead earlier in the day.

"When I tried to comfort a person with a daughter hospitalized at the National Medical Center yesterday, they said their daughter would survive and they believed so," he said. "But I heard she passed away this morning. I am sorry that my apology has come late."

During a Cabinet council meeting Tuesday, President Yoon Suk Yeol acknowledged that South Korea lacks research on crowd management. He called for the use of drones and other high-tech resources to develop an effective crowd control capability, and said the government will soon meet with experts to review national safety rules.

India's prime minister visits site of bridge collapse

Associated Press

MORBI, India — India's prime minister on Tuesday visited the site in western India where a newly repaired 143-year-old suspension bridge collapsed into a river, sending hundreds plunging into the water and killing at least 135.

Narendra Modi inspected the collapsed bridge in Morbi town in Gujarat state and talked to rescuers. He also visited injured

people at a hospital. Gujarat is Modi's home state. He said Monday he was "deeply saddened by the tragedy" and his office announced compensation for families of the dead.

Angered and bereaved families mourned the dead as attention turned to why the pedestrian bridge, touted by the state's tourism website as an "artistic and technological marvel," collapsed Sunday

evening, and who might be responsible. The bridge had reopened just four days earlier.

Police Inspector-General Ashok Yadav told The Associated Press that no one was missing according to an official tally, but emergency responders and divers continued to search Tuesday. The officer said at least 196 people were rescued and all 10 of the injured were in stable condition.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Roaches spoil Halloween along suburban street

MI WYANDOTTE — Trick-or-treating is off limits in a suburban Detroit neighborhood: There's nothing sweet about bringing home a cockroach.

Officials in Wyandotte said a cockroach infestation has been confirmed at a vacant home after a tip from a trash hauler. The pests have been moving to other homes.

Sidewalks were closed Monday night on a portion of 20th Street. City engineer Greg Mayhew said a Halloween ban will prevent "further roach migration." Officials don't want the bugs hitching a ride on costumes, the Detroit Free Press reported.

The city is trying to exterminate the roaches but "it will take some time," Mayhew said.

5 injured when deputy rear-ends Amish buggy

NY CHAUTAUQUA — Five people were injured when a sheriff's deputy rear-ended an Amish buggy in western New York, authorities said.

The crash happened on an unlit road where the speed limit was 55 mph, the Chautauqua County Sheriff's Office said in a news release.

The deputy was driving a marked patrol car when he struck the rear of a buggy traveling in the same direction, the sheriff's office said.

The five people in the buggy were taken to a hospital for treatment of injuries. The deputy was not injured.

The horse had to be put down

due to its injuries, authorities said.

The crash is under investigation.

Pastor investigated for campaigning in service

VA NEWPORT NEWS — A Virginia pastor who is running for a City Council seat is being investigated by local authorities for allegedly campaigning and soliciting donations during church services.

The Daily Press reported that a video surfaced recently showing Willard Maxwell Jr., pastor of New Beech Grove Baptist Church and a candidate for the North District Seat B on the Newport News City Council, asking for donations and encouraging audience members during a church service to put up signs on his behalf.

"We have signs out there if you want to take a sign to your house, that would be great," he said in the video. He added later, "Anytime you want to donate \$5, \$25 — it doesn't matter, or get other people to donate, I would really appreciate it."

According to the IRS, religious organizations are prohibited from campaigning on behalf of — or in opposition to — any political candidate for elective public office. Churches that violate this provision are at risk of losing tax-exempt status.

Historical Ernest Gaines marker was stolen

LA NEW ROADS — Authorities are looking for a stolen sign marking a centuries-old tree that inspired Louisiana author Ernest Gaines.

The Pointe Coupee Parish

Sheriff's Office said the historical marker identifying the "Miss Jane Pittman Oak" was stolen recently and the parish government is offering a \$500 reward for information leading to its recovery or the arrest of the thief, news outlets reported.

The tree itself is believed to be about 400 years old and served as partial inspiration for "The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman," the book that gained widespread notice for the internationally acclaimed award-winning author. The book describes a first-person narrative of a fictional 110-year-old woman born into slavery.

Historians have said Gaines regularly walked past the oak tree, which sits along Louisiana Highway 16 in Lakeland, a village in the parish, on his way to the grocery store.

Review sought as state park manager indicted

MD BALTIMORE — Two Maryland lawmakers have called for an independent review of the state Department of Natural Resources' handling of repeated complaints against the former manager at Gunpowder Falls State Park.

A Baltimore County grand jury indicted former longtime manager Michael Browning on Monday on charges that include rape and assault.

The Baltimore Sun reported that state Sen. Sarah Elfreth and Del. Eric Luedtke called for the review in a letter to Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio, Maryland's secretary of natural resources.

Baltimore County Police arrested Browning, 71, in September and charged him with sex-

ually assaulting a former park employee. According to charging documents, the woman told police she met Browning as a teenager while attending a youth club his wife ran before working with Browning at the park.

Police wrote in charging documents that the two had a year-long consensual relationship. The woman told police that she tried to end the relationship and that Browning raped her 10 to 15 times.

Browning's attorney, Gary Bernstein, said Browning denies all the charges.

Whales off coast delay commercial crab season

CA SAN FRANCISCO — The start of the commercial Dungeness crab season in California will be delayed to protect whales from becoming entangled in trap and buoy lines.

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife said it was delaying the start of the commercial season, which traditionally begins Nov. 15, for waters between the Mendocino County line and the border with Mexico.

"Based on recent surveys, large aggregations of humpbacks whales continue to forage in California coastal waters and allowing the use of crab traps would increase the risk of an entanglement," Fish and Wildlife Director Charlton H. Bonham said in a statement.

The department said it plans to issue its next assessment on the presence of endangered whales on or around Nov. 23, when it will decide whether commercial Dungeness crab fishing can start.

— From wire reports

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Nash out as coach for struggling Nets

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Steve Nash is out as Brooklyn Nets coach after a disappointing start and more controversy surrounding Kyrie Irving.

The Nets announced Tuesday that they had parted ways with the Hall of Fame point guard, a day after they beat Indiana to improve to 2-5.

Nash made it to this season after Kevin Durant said he wanted him out this summer, but not much longer. The Nets have been another mess, with bad play on the court and bad headlines off it.

The biggest — again — was created by Irving, who posted a link to an antisemitic work on his Twitter page last week, drawing criticism from Nets owner Joe Tsai.

“Since becoming head coach, Steve was faced with a number of unprecedented

challenges, and we are sincerely grateful for his leadership, patience and humility throughout his tenure,” general manager Sean Marks said in a statement.

“Personally, this was an immensely difficult decision; however, after much deliberation and evaluation of how the season has begun, we agreed that a change is necessary at this time.”

Nash led the Nets to a 92-62 record and the playoffs in both full seasons, his first as an NBA coach. But they lost Irving and James Harden to injuries during their second-round loss to Milwaukee in 2021, then were a first-round flop last season after trading Harden during the middle of the season.

Much of their problems during the latter season were caused by Irving being unavailable for most of their home games be-

cause he refused to get vaccinated for the coronavirus, as mandated at the time in New York City.

Nash handled it all as best as possible, but apparently not good enough for his best player. Durant said he wanted to be traded this summer if the Nets didn’t fire Marks and Nash, but Tsai stood by them and Durant eventually pulled back his request.

Nash downplayed that before this season began, saying he didn’t believe the reports were entirely true and that they had quickly talked through their issues.

But things started poorly this season and Nash gave some of his hardest criticism of the team during his tenure after their loss to Indiana on Saturday night, calling their defense effort a “disaster” and seeing he didn’t see desire or will.

Bucks edge Pistons, run season-opening streak to 6

Associated Press

MILWAUKEE — Jrue Holiday hit a tie-breaking three-pointer with 45.3 seconds left and finished with 25 points, 10 assists and seven rebounds as the Milwaukee Bucks edged the Detroit Pistons 110-108 on Monday night to extend their season-opening win streak to six games.

“He’s (Holiday) just a magician with it, man, the type of step-backs he does,” said Milwaukee’s Bobby Portis, who had 15 points and 12 rebounds.

Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 31 points and Brook Lopez had 24 to help the Bucks remain the NBA’s only undefeated team.

Cade Cunningham scored 27 points and Bojan Bogdanovic added 23 for the Pistons. Jaden Ivey scored 19, Hamidou Diallo 13, Isaiah Stewart 11 and Saddiq Bey 10 for Detroit.

One night after beating the defending champion Golden State Warriors to snap a five-game skid, the young Pistons nearly took down another NBA heavyweight.

Detroit’s starting lineup included only one player (the 33-year-old Bogdanovic) who is older than 23. Three of the Pistons’ starters are 21 or younger. All five of the Bucks’ starters are at least 27, including the 34-year-old Lopez and 32-year-old Holiday.

“A lot of talented guys there learning

how to play, but they’ve been learning quickly and getting a lot better,” Lopez said. “They’re definitely better than their record.”

Although they never led, the Pistons rallied from a 16-point deficit to tie the score at 105-all when Cunningham found Stewart under the basket with 57.6 seconds left. Holiday answered by sinking a step-back 26-footer on Milwaukee’s next possession.

Nets 116, Pacers 109: Kevin Durant scored 36 points to lift host Brooklyn to a much-needed win over Indiana.

Durant authored some personal and franchise history in Brooklyn’s second win of the season (2-5). With two free throws in the first quarter, Durant passed Vince Carter for 19th on the NBA’s career scoring list. He now has 25,754 points. And he has scored at least 25 points in each of the first seven games of the season, the most in franchise history.

Kyrie Irving added 28 points and Nic Claxton had 19 points and nine rebounds.

Despite a 30-point performance from Chris Duarte, Indiana dropped to 3-5. Buddy Hield chipped in with 22. Bennedict Mathurin contributed 16, and Tyrese Haliburton had 11.

76ers 118, Wizards 111: James Harden scored 23 points and had 17 assists as visiting Philadelphia clawed back to .500 with a victory over Washington despite

missing Joel Embiid.

Tyrese Maxey added 28 points for Philadelphia. Embiid, the back-to-back NBA MVP finalist, missed out due to non-COVID-19 related illness.

Kings 115, Hornets 108: Kevin Huerter scored 26 points, Davion Mitchell added 23 points, including two clutch jumpers late in the game, and Sacramento rallied from a 15-point halftime deficit to beat host Charlotte for its second straight win.

P.J. Washington led the Hornets in scoring with 28 points. Kelly Oubre Jr. added 16 for Charlotte.

Raptors 139, Hawks 109: Pascal Siakam had 31 points and 12 rebounds and Scottie Barnes scored a season-high 21 points as Toronto routed visiting Atlanta.

Gary Trent Jr. scored 21 points and O.G. Anunoby had 14 as the Raptors set a season high in points and improved to 3-1 at home.

Trae Young had 14 points and 10 assists, and John Collins had 12 points and 12 rebounds before fouling out as the Hawks lost their second straight. Dejounte Murray scored 20 points for the Hawks, Clint Capela had 13 and De’Andre Hunter 11.

Jazz 121, Grizzlies 105: Lauri Markkanen had 31 points and 10 rebounds to lead Utah over visiting Memphis.

Ja Morant had 37 points to pace the Grizzlies. Dillon Brooks added 19 points and Tyus Jones chipped in 12.

Chubb, Browns blast Burrow, Bengals

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — For the first time this season, the Cleveland Browns put it all together and played like a complete team — offense, defense special teams.

Scary, on Halloween.

"It was one of those days where we imposed our will," quarterback Jacoby Brissett said.

Nick Chubb rushed for two touchdowns and Myles Garrett and Cleveland's defense frustrated Joe Burrow as the Browns thrashed Cincinnati 32-13 on Monday night, keeping the Bengals star quarterback winless against them.

Garrett, who came to FirstEnergy Stadium wearing a Halloween costume, led a fired-up defense that sacked Burrow five times and held the Bengals (4-4) to 229 total yards — 100 in the first half.

"Myles was very good," Browns coach Kevin Stefanski said with a smile. "He does what No. 95 does. He was playing dominant out there. He is very difficult for people to block one on one. He gets a ton of attention, and when that happens, others are getting one on ones."

Burrow has already been to the Super Bowl in just three NFL seasons. However, the Ohio native has yet to beat Cleveland, dropping to 0-4 in four career starts against Cincinnati's AFC North rival.

The Browns (3-5) ended a four-game losing streak, and in the process saved their

season from slipping away as they try to stay competitive while awaiting quarterback Deshaun Watson's return from an 11-game suspension.

Garrett was pleased with the performance, but as the Browns head into their bye, he stressed it won't mean anything without another one like it.

"It has to be routine. It has to be the standard," he said. "We have to make sure that everything we did leading up to this game is the same the week after this one. We have what it takes. We have taken our lumps, but we will show what we have and our dedication to the game and what it takes to get wins in this league because they don't come easily."

"Right now, to get a win like this, and in a dominant fashion, it is showing the guys how good we can really be."

Brissett ran for a TD and passed for another, leading Cleveland to its fifth straight win over Cincinnati. He completed 17 of 22 for 278 yards and a career-high 133.7 rating while outplaying Burrow.

Chubb scored on runs of 3 and 11 yards, and Brissett added a 3-yard TD run and connected with Amari Cooper on a 4-yard pass in the second half as the Browns built a 25-0 lead while playing their best all-around game in 2022.

"The game was 25-0 before you even know it," Bengals coach Zac Taylor said. "We just didn't come back. The worst thing

to do against the Cleveland Browns is to give them a two, three score lead with their running game and their pass rush."

Led by Garrett, Cleveland's defense, which has struggled for most of the season, put relentless pressure on Burrow, who was without top receiver Ja'Marr Chase because of a hip injury.

Burrow finished 25-for-35 for 232 yards with two TDs and one interception.

"He's one of the elite of the elite in the game," Burrow said of Garrett, who finished with 1½ sacks. "He's always going to make plays like he did tonight."

Burrow connected on scoring passes in the fourth quarter to Tyler Boyd and Tee Higgins, but those only helped him pad his stats and took some sting out of the scoreboard.

Garrett set the tone for a scary performance for the Browns by dressing up as Vecna, the sinister alien-like character from the TV series "Stranger Things." This was indeed a strange night as the Browns finally looked like a competent team and recorded a lopsided win after many close losses.

"We expect him to set the tone for us," Brissett said of Garrett. "He will come up and tell you that he fed off of a lot of those other guys. There were not a lot of places for them to throw the ball tonight, and that was because of the back end but also because of the front end."

Source: Bears trade All-Pro LB Smith to Ravens

Associated Press

OWINGS MILLS, Md. — The Chicago Bears agreed to trade linebacker Roquan Smith to the Baltimore Ravens on Monday, according to a person with knowledge of the deal.

The person spoke on the condition of anonymity because the trade had not been announced.

Smith, the NFL leader in tackles so far this season, joins a Baltimore team that sits atop the AFC North.

The Ravens have had their issues defensively this season, but they've improved in that area and now add a second-team All-Pro to their linebacking group.

It's the Bears' second major trade involving a defensive player in less than a week. They dealt three-time Pro Bowl defensive end Robert Quinn to Philadelphia for a 2023

fourth-round pick on Wednesday.

Smith was at the dais addressing reporters when reports of the Quinn trade surfaced. He became emotional and cut the session short.

On Monday, Ravens coach John Harbaugh held his usual weekly news conference — shortly before the news of the Smith trade broke. He was asked if he anticipated a move before Tuesday's trade deadline.

"If I did, then the cat would be out of the bag," he said.

The 25-year-old Smith has 83 tackles and 2½ sacks this season. A first-round pick by Chicago in 2018, he has 16½ sacks in his career.

With his rookie contract set to expire, Smith was hoping to strike a new deal. He participated in voluntary and mandatory

offseason workouts, but with negotiations at a standstill with the Bears, things took a heated turn once training camp started.

Smith, who does not have an agent, opted to "hold in" — attending meetings and practices without participating in drills. Tensions boiled over when he went public with a trade request.

He accused general manager Ryan Poles of negotiating in bad faith.

Now Smith joins the Ravens, who have led by double digits in every game this season but have had some pretty bad fourth-quarter collapses.

Ravens linebacker Justin Houston already has six sacks on the season. Linebacker Odafe Oweh and defensive lineman Calais Campbell are also pass-rushing threats — and the Ravens added linebacker Jason Pierre-Paul in late September.

Auburn fires Harsin; won just 9 games

Associated Press

AUBURN, Ala. — Auburn fired coach Bryan Harsin on Monday after less than two seasons, ending a rocky tenure in which the proud program struggled to compete in the Southeastern Conference.

Harsin went 9-12 overall and 3-5 this year. Auburn has lost four straight games while struggling against Power Five opponents, including a 41-27 loss to Arkansas on Oct. 29 that proved to be the final straw. Auburn will owe Harsin 70% of his remaining contract — more than \$15 million — and half of that must be paid within 30 days.

“President (Chris) Roberts made the decision after a thorough review and evaluation of all aspects of the football program,” the school said in a brief statement announcing the move.

“Auburn will begin an immediate search for a coach that will return the Auburn program to a place where it is consistently competing at the highest levels and representing the winning tradition that is Auburn football,” the statement said.

Auburn canceled its weekly football news conference about 90 minutes before Harsin was scheduled to speak. The school named running backs

coach Carnell “Cadillac” Williams as interim coach. The Tigers play at Mississippi State on Saturday.

Williams is in his third season as an assistant at his alma mater, where he was the fifth overall pick in the 2005 NFL draft and earned Rookie of the Year honors at Tampa Bay.

Harsin was hired away from Boise State in December 2020 and Auburn gave him a six-year, \$31.5 million deal. He never came close to replicating his past success or making the Tigers competitive in the SEC, and he failed to keep up with rivals Georgia and Alabama on the field or on the recruiting trail.

Those results were unacceptable to a program that won a national title in 2010 and played for another in 2013, when it won the most recent of its eight SEC championships.

Auburn has lost three straight bowl games, including the Birmingham Bowl against Houston under Harsin. That was Auburn’s fifth straight loss and the Tigers dropped to 6-7, their first losing season since 2012.

Harsin, 45, becomes the first Auburn coach to end his tenure with a losing record since Earl Brown went 3-22-4 from 1948-50, not counting interim coaches. He

went 3-10 after winning six of his first eight games and won four times in 15 games against Power Five opponents.

New athletic director John Cohen, who had held the same post at Mississippi State until Monday, will take on the job of finding Harsin’s replacement.

The Tigers struggled throughout the season, with the normally reliable defense giving up 40-plus points three times while the offense never solved its own problems.

The heat on Harsin rose after a 41-12 loss to Penn State and didn’t cool off much after that. A listless 42-10 loss to No. 1 Georgia emphasized the talent gap facing the Tigers, who subsequently fell to Mississippi and the Razorbacks.

Harsin said after the loss in Athens that he focuses on the things under his control, but added that the enjoyment of coaching “never goes away.”

Auburn is tied with Texas A&M for last in the SEC West at 1-4. Much of Jordan-Hare Stadium had emptied out by the fourth quarter against Arkansas.

“Obviously from the outcome of the game, nobody’s going to feel what we did was good enough,” Harsin said. “I think everyone is in there hurting, which we should be.”

Svechnikov lifts Hurricanes over Capitals in SO

Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — Andrei Svechnikov scored the winning goal in a shootout after tying the game in the second period, and the Carolina Hurricanes defeated the Washington Capitals 3-2 on Monday night.

Stefan Noesen also scored for Carolina in regulation. Martin Necas had two assists, and Frederik Andersen made 18 saves.

“I think we’re pretty resilient and play the game the right way,” Noesen said.

Alex Ovechkin and Dylan Strome scored in regulation for the Capitals. Darcy Kuemper stopped 33 shots.

It was the first shootout for both teams this season. Carolina’s Brent Burns and Washington’s Evgeny Kuznetsov converted to begin the tiebreaker, but Svechnikov had the only other tally.

“Sometimes you’re on the right side of it and sometimes you’re not,” Capitals center Lars Eller said.

Svechnikov is 7-for-13 career in shoot-

outs, with five game-deciding goals.

“It’s a flip of a coin, but we have to be happy to get the two points,” said Andersen, who stopped Ovechkin’s shootout attempt. “We don’t care how they come.”

Carolina won its second straight, including an overtime victory Saturday at Philadelphia.

Washington’s Marcus Johansson took a penalty late in the third period, and Eller went to the box for two minutes in overtime.

“It didn’t set up the way you wanted it to,” Capitals coach Peter Laviolette said. “We didn’t get a chance to win. It got to a shootout and they were better than us in the shootout.”

Ovechkin converted on a second-period power play with a shot from the left side, notching his 47th goal in 86 career games against Carolina.

Sabres 8, Red Wings 3: Tage Thompson had three goals and three assists for a ca-

reer-high six points to lead host Buffalo.

Rasmus Dahlin, Jack Quinn, Dylan Cozens, Jeff Skinner and Rasmus Asplund also scored for the Sabres, who won for the sixth time in nine games. Eric Comrie had 14 saves.

Buffalo had its highest scoring output since a nine-goal effort against Ottawa on Nov. 3, 2018.

Dylan Larkin, Olli Maatta and David Perron scored for the Red Wings.

Kings 5, Blues 1: Carl Grundstrom scored two goals in Los Angeles’ four-goal second period, and the visiting Kings beat St. Louis.

Gabriel Vilardi, Anze Kopitar and Arthur Kaliyev also scored for the Kings, who have won three of four. Jonathan Quick stopped 27 shots.

Alexey Toropchenko scored for St. Louis, which has lost five straight in regulation for the first time since Craig Berube took over as coach in the 2018-19 season.