

## DOD leader restates Taiwan support

By JOHN VANDIVER

*Stars and Stripes*

Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin reaffirmed the U.S. commitment to Taiwan on Friday, but stopped short of saying whether the U.S. military would help defend the country if it were to come under attack from China.

“I won’t engage in hypotheticals with respect to Taiwan,” Austin said at the conclusion of talks with allies at NATO headquarters in Brussels.

On Thursday, President Joe Biden caused a stir during a CNN town hall meeting when asked if the U.S. would defend Taiwan if it came under attack.

“Yes, we have a commitment to do that,” Biden said, raising questions about whether the U.S. was shifting from its long-standing policy of “strategic ambiguity.” The U.S. offers support to Taiwan though military aid,

weapons sales and training.

Austin said the U.S. was still committed to its one China policy.

The 1979 policy acknowledges Beijing as the sole legal government of China but takes no clear position on Taiwan’s sovereignty.

For NATO’s part, China has become more of a focal point.

In 2019, the alliance declared for the first time that China’s rise brings with it security implications for Europe.

And in June, NATO issued a declaration saying members are “increasingly confronted by cyber, hybrid, and other asymmetric threats, including disinformation campaigns, and by the malicious use of ever-more sophisticated emerging and disruptive technologies” at the hands of China and Russia.

Among NATO members, Austin said “there is an increasing interest in checking

that kind of behavior.”

Still, there are mixed views within the alliance about how to deal with China’s increasing assertiveness. Germany, an economic powerhouse in Europe that relies heavily on exports to China, has been especially reluctant to take a more critical stance against Beijing.

But with China and Russia in mind, allies on Friday agreed to establish an innovation fund that aims to funnel more than \$1 billion into new technologies intended to help “futureproof” the alliance.

Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said the fund will ensure allies get the latest technology and capabilities that will be critical to security. Allies also agreed to an artificial intelligence strategy for the first time during the Brussels talks.

“New technologies are reshaping our world and our security,” Stoltenberg said.

## Navy reassess ‘bad paper’ discharges in settlement

By NIKKI WENTLING

*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — The Navy has agreed to review and potentially upgrade other-than-honorable discharges given to Navy and Marine Corps veterans dating back to March 2012, as part of a settlement reached this month.

The agreement is pending approval by the U.S. District Court for the District of Connecticut. It orders the Navy Discharge Review Board to reconsider cases in which the board denied upgrades despite evidence that veterans were struggling with post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury or military sexual trauma when they separated from the military.

A hearing is scheduled for Dec. 16, during which the court will decide whether to give final

approval to the settlement.

The court approved a similar settlement agreement with the Army during the spring. At the time, lawyers with the Yale Law School Veterans Legal Services Clinic, which represented veterans in the case, said they hoped the decision would provide momentum for the Navy case.

The Defense Department instituted a policy in 2017 to give “liberal consideration” to veterans looking to upgrade their other-than-honorable discharges, or “bad paper” discharges, in situations in which a service-related medical disorder could have led to their misconduct. Plaintiffs in the lawsuit argued the Army Discharge Review Board ignored the policy and denied upgrades when they were warranted.

The wrongful discharges go

back even further, according to the Government Accountability Office. The GAO has reported the Pentagon didn’t consistently apply previous policies going back to 2011 that required discharge review boards to take mental health issues into consideration.

Bad paper discharges disqualify veterans from receiving certain health and education benefits, as well as preferential hiring and tax breaks.

The lawsuit was filed in 2018 by Iraq War veteran Tyson Manker, who was kicked out of the Marine Corps after being caught with marijuana, which he said he used to self-medicate. He was later denied a discharge upgrade despite being diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder.

The Veterans Legal Services Clinic is seeking other veterans

who might be part of the class-action settlement. Veterans affected by the settlement can submit written comments to the court or appear at the hearing Dec. 16 to offer their opinions on the agreement. The clinic is asking those veterans to go to [mankersettlement.com](http://mankersettlement.com) to learn if they meet the criteria for the case.

In addition to reviewing cases going back to 2012, the settlement would require the Navy to allow veterans with bad paper discharges going back to 2001 to reapply for a discharge upgrade.

As part of the agreement, veterans also will be allowed to participate in their review board hearings through video conferencing. Veterans are required now to appear in person in Washington if they want to argue their case.

# Intel reports see strife from climate change

By *The Washington Post*

As the United States and nations around the world struggle to blunt the effects of rising temperatures and extreme weather, sweeping assessments released Thursday by the White House, the U.S. intelligence community and the Pentagon conclude that climate change will exacerbate long-standing threats to global security.

Together, the reports show a deepening concern within the U.S. security establishment that the shifts unleashed by climate change can reshape U.S. strategic interests, offer new opportunities to rivals such as China, and increase instability in nuclear states such as North Korea and Pakistan.

The reports emerge as world leaders prepare to gather in Glasgow next month for crucial U.N. climate talks. And the assessments suggest that the Biden administration is preparing to take on the national security consequences of global warming after four years of inaction under President Donald Trump. During his presidency, climate-related security assessments were routinely suppressed because they did not match his administration's skeptical stance toward climate science.

Shortly after President Biden came into office, he ordered that climate change play a far more prominent role in U.S. security strategy.

The Pentagon report in particular marks a shift in how the U.S. military establishment is incorporating climate issues into its security strategy, analysts said. Until now, when the Defense Department has considered climate change, it has tended to focus on how floods and extreme heat can affect military readiness rather than the broader geopolitical conse-

quences of a warming world. Now it is worried that climate change could lead to state failure.

"Climate change is altering the strategic landscape and shaping the security environment, posing complex threats to the United States and nations around the world," Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said in a statement that accompanied the Pentagon report. "To deter war and protect our country, the [Defense] Department must understand the ways climate change affects missions, plans, and capabilities."

The shift in Washington comes as militaries and security agencies around the world are accounting for global warming in their planning. At NATO, Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg earlier this year made climate change a major focus of the defense alliance as it overhauls its strategic plans. The British military this spring unveiled a sustainability report that counsels a top-to-bottom overhaul of military operations to prepare for far more climate-related deployments in the coming decades.

The release of the U.S. assessments "sends a warning message ahead of next month's U.N. summit of the grave risks that we're facing and why it's so critical. These reports are overdue," said Erin Sikorsky, director of the Center for Climate and Security and a former senior U.S. intelligence official focused on climate issues.

The new National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) on climate, a first-of-its kind document by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, builds on other grim warnings from national security officials about how a changing climate could upend societies and topple governments.

"We assess that climate change will increasingly exacerbate risks to U.S. national security interests as the physical impacts increase and geopolitical tensions mount about how to respond to the challenge," the document states. It also concludes that while momentum to reduce global emissions of greenhouse gases is growing, "current policies and pledges are insufficient" to meet the goals that countries laid out in the landmark Paris climate accord.

A former senior intelligence official lauded the document's contribution to understanding the security implications of climate change.

"This NIE represents a valuable iteration on findings from past intelligence assessments," said Rod Schoonover, who was director of environment and natural resources at the National Intelligence Council in the Obama and Trump administrations.

"However, the report lacks a singular top-line statement that adequately conveys the seriousness and immediacy of the multifactorial risks associated with ongoing climate-linked stresses, and humanity's tendency to increase its own vulnerability to these stresses," Schoonover said in an email.

The NIE offers a dim assessment of the prospects for unified international action.

"Countries are arguing about who should act sooner and competing to control the growing clean energy transition," it states, concluding that "most countries will face difficult economic choices and probably will count on technological breakthroughs to rapidly reduce their net emissions later."

As developing and vulnerable nations cope with the effects, they may turn to Washington for

help, "creating additional demands on U.S. diplomatic, economic, humanitarian, and military resources," the report says.

The Pentagon warns that disruption to fisheries could spark conflict over food security. Unpredictable rainfall might increase tensions over access to rivers that cross national boundaries, such as the Nile and the Mekong. Even efforts to combat climate change could lead to unintended consequences, such as conflicts over access to the rare minerals that are needed to build circuitry and wind turbines.

The report says the Defense Department should ready itself to provide humanitarian assistance in climate crises, incorporate climate-related issues into its war-games — and also work on "countering malign actors who seek to exploit climate change to gain influence." Some of the most specific analyses remained classified.

The White House report on migration, which examines the way climate change is driving human movement around the world, notes that drought and other extreme weather can spark conflicts and force population displacements — and that countries such as China and Russia are poised to take advantage.

It advocates expanding asylum and refugee programs to better take into account climate-driven migration. And it says that U.S. policymakers need to be ready to direct resources toward regions that are facing influxes of migrants driven to move by extreme weather, droughts and climate-related conflicts. It cites one report that estimates that by 2050, up to 143 million people in Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia could move for climate-driven reasons.

# CDC approves rollout of more boosters, mixing

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — Millions more Americans can get a COVID-19 booster and choose a different company's vaccine for that next shot, federal health officials said Thursday.

Certain people who received Pfizer vaccinations months ago already are eligible for a booster and now the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says specific Moderna and Johnson & Johnson recipients qualify, too. And in a bigger change, the agency is allowing the flexibility of "mixing and matching" that extra dose regardless of which type people received first.

The Food and Drug Administration had already authorized such an expansion of the nation's booster campaign on Wednesday, and it was also endorsed Thursday by a CDC advisory panel. CDC Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky had the final word on who gets the extra doses.

"These past 20 months have taught us many things, but mostly to have humility," she told the panel. "We are constantly learning about this virus, growing the evidence base and accumulating more data."

There still are restrictions on who qualifies and when for a booster. Starting six

months past their last Pfizer or Moderna vaccination, people are urged to get a booster if they're 65 or older, nursing home residents, or at least 50 and at increased risk of severe disease because of health problems. Boosters also were allowed, but not urged, for adults of any age at increased risk of infection because of health problems or their jobs or living conditions. That includes health care workers, teachers and people in jails or homeless shelters.

Moderna's booster will come at half the dose of the original two shots.

As for recipients of the single-shot J&J vaccine, a COVID-19 booster is recommended for everyone at least two months after their vaccination. That's because the J&J vaccine hasn't proved as protective as the two-dose Moderna or Pfizer options.

The CDC panel didn't explicitly recommend anyone get a different brand than they started with but left open the option — saying only that a booster of some sort was recommended. And some of the advisers said they would prefer that J&J recipients receive a competitor's booster, citing preliminary data from an ongoing government study that suggested a bigger boost in virus-fighting antibodies from that combination.

# House votes to hold Trump ally Bannon in contempt of Congress

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — The House has voted to hold Steve Bannon, a longtime ally and aide to former President Donald Trump, in contempt of Congress for defying a subpoena from the committee investigating the violent Jan. 6 Capitol insurrection.

In a rare show of bipartisanship on the House floor, the committee's Democratic chairman, Mississippi Rep. Bennie Thompson, led the floor debate along with Republican Rep. Liz Cheney of Wyoming, one of two Republicans on the panel. Still, the vote Thursday was 229-202 with all but nine GOP lawmakers who voted saying "no."

The House vote sends the matter to the U.S. attorney's office in Washington, where it will now be up to prosecutors in that office to decide whether to present the case to a

grand jury for possible criminal charges. It's still uncertain whether they will pursue the case — Attorney General Merrick Garland would only say at a House hearing on Thursday that they plan to "make a decision consistent with the principles of prosecution."

Democrats have vowed to comprehensively probe the assault in which hundreds of Trump's supporters battered their way past police, injured dozens of officers and interrupted the electoral count certifying President Joe Biden's November victory. Lawmakers on the panel say they will move swiftly and forcefully to punish anyone who won't cooperate with the probe.

"We will not allow anyone to derail our work, because our work is too important," Thompson said ahead of the vote.

# White House, Dems reworking \$2T Biden plan

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — The White House and Democrats are hurriedly reworking key aspects of President Joe Biden's \$2 trillion domestic policy plan, trimming the social services and climate change programs and rethinking new taxes on corporations and the wealthy to pay for a scaled-back package.

The changes come as Biden more forcefully appeals to the American public, including in a televised town hall Thursday, for what he says are the middle-class values at the heart of his proposal.

Biden mentioned during the evening event the challenge he faces in wrangling the sharply divergent factions in the Democratic party to agree to the final contours of the bill. With an evenly divided Senate, he can't afford to lose a single vote, and he is navigating the competing demands of progressives, who want major investments in social services, and centrists, who want to see the price tag on the package come down.

"When you're president of the United States, you have 50 Democrats — every one is a president. Every single one. So you gotta work things out," he said during a CNN town hall.

Still, he expressed optimism about the process, saying "I think so" when asked if Democrats were close to a deal.

"It's all about compromise. Compromise has become a dirty word, but bipartisanship and compromise still has to be possible," he said.

Biden later said the discussions are "down to four or five issues."

On one issue — the taxes to pay for the package — the White House idea seemed to be making headway with a new strategy of abandoning plans for reversing Trump-era tax cuts in favor of an approach that would involve taxing the investment incomes of billionaires to help finance the deal.

Even as he seemed encouraged by progress, Biden acknowledged major reductions to his original vision. He signaled the final plan would no longer provide free community college, but said he hoped to increase Pell Grants to compensate for the loss of the policy.

"It's not going to get us the whole thing, but it is a start," he said.

# Baldwin fires prop, kills crew member

*Associated Press*

SANTA FE, N.M. — Actor Alec Baldwin fired a prop gun on the set of a Western and killed the cinematographer, officials said. The director of the movie was wounded, and authorities are investigating what happened.

Halyna Hutchins, cinematographer on “Rust,” and director Joel Souza were shot Thursday in the desert on the southern outskirts of Santa Fe.

A spokesperson for Baldwin said there was an accident involving the misfire of a prop gun with blanks. Santa Fe County Sheriff’s spokes-

man Juan Rios said detectives were investigating what type of projectile was discharged and how. No immediate charges were filed.

It was not clear if Baldwin was performing at the time of the shooting or how many rounds were fired, and little was known about the weapon. On Friday, Baldwin tweeted, expressing his condolences to Hutchins’ family and calling the shooting an accident.

“There are no words to convey my shock and sadness regarding the tragic accident that took the life of Halyna Hutchins, a wife, mother and deeply admired colleague of ours. I’m fully cooperating with the police investigation,” he

wrote on Twitter. “My heart is broken for her husband, their son, and all who knew and loved Halyna.”

Prop guns fire blanks, gunpowder charges that produce a flash and a bang but not a hard projectile. But when the trigger is pulled, the paper or plastic wadding is ejected from the barrel with enough force that it can be lethal at close range.

Hutchins, 42, was airlifted to a hospital, where she was pronounced dead. Souza, 48, who was wounded in the collarbone area, was taken by ambulance to a medical center.

## FBI IDs remains found as Brian Laundrie’s

*Associated Press*

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. — The FBI on Thursday identified human remains found in a Florida nature preserve as those of Brian Laundrie, a person of interest in the death of girlfriend Gabby Petito while the couple was on a cross-country road trip.

The remains, a backpack and notebook believed to belong to Laundrie were discovered Wednesday in a Florida wilderness park, according to the FBI. The area where they were found had been under water during earlier searches.

The FBI’s Denver office said in a news release a comparison of dental records confirmed that the remains were Laundrie’s. A lawyer for his parents, Steve Bertolino, also confirmed in a statement they were told the remains were those of their son.

“We have no further comment at this time and we ask that you respect the Laundrie’s privacy at this time,” the statement said.

The FBI statement did not list a cause of death. It wasn’t clear how long the remains may have been submerged in water.

The discovery of the remains concluded a massive search involving federal, state and local law enforcement that began shortly after Laundrie disappeared Sept. 14, two weeks after the 23-year-old returned alone to his parents’ home in North Port, Fla.

The investigation into Petito’s slaying, however, is not yet concluded. But only Laundrie has ever been identified by law enforcement officials as a person of interest in the case.

Petito’s family reported her missing Sept.

11, launching a search that garnered worldwide media attention and, in Laundrie’s case, focused largely on the Carlton Reserve wilderness park near the Laundrie home. It is a densely wooded, swampy area that’s home to alligators, coyotes, bobcats, snakes and numerous other creatures.

Her body was found Sept. 19 on the edge of Wyoming’s Grand Teton National Park, which the couple had visited. The coroner there concluded she died of strangulation.

The remains were found Wednesday as searches concentrated on the nearby Myakkahatchee Creek Environmental Park, where a Ford Mustang that Laundrie drove to the wilderness was found. That park is directly adjacent to the Carlton Reserve, both of which are about 35 miles south of Sarasota, Fla.

## Haiti gang boss threatens to kill abducted missionaries

*Associated Press*

PORT-AU-PRINCE) — The boss of a notorious Haitian gang accused of kidnapping 17 members of a U.S.-based missionary group last weekend is warning that the hostages will be killed if his demands aren’t met.

“I swear by thunder that if I don’t get what I’m asking for, I will put a bullet in the heads of these Americans,” gang leader Wilson Joseph said in a video posted on social media Thursday.

Officials said early in the week that the 400 Mawozo gang was demanding \$1 million for each of those kidnapped, although it wasn’t clear if that included the five children in the group, among them an 8-month-

old. Sixteen Americans and one Canadian were abducted, along with their Haitian driver.

Joseph also threatened Prime Minister Ariel Henry and Haiti’s national police chief as he spoke in front of the open coffins that apparently held several members of his gang who were recently killed.

“You guys make me cry. I cry water. But I’m going to make you guys cry blood,” he said.

Later in the day, Henry’s office announced that Leon Charles had resigned as head of Haiti’s National Police and was replaced by Frantz Elbe. The newspaper Le Nouvelliste said Elbe was director of the police departments of the South East and

Nippes and previously served as general security coordinator at the National Palace when Jocelerme Privert was provisional president.

“We would like for public peace to be restored, that we return to normal life and that we regain our way to democracy,” Henry said.

There was no immediate comment from Charles or Elbe.

The missionaries who were abducted Saturday during a visit to an orphanage are with Ohio-based Christian Aid Ministries, which held a news conference before Joseph’s video was posted.

The organization later issued a statement saying it would not comment on the video.

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

### Leaf peepers see final peak foliage conditions

**ME** AUGUSTA — Maine leaf peepers have just a few more days to watch the state's annual fall foliage display.

Almost all of the state is past peak conditions for fall colors, the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry said Wednesday. The department said peak conditions are still occurring along the state's immediate coastal areas.

The state's oak trees are typically the last to reveal orange and gold leaves, and that's starting to happen along the coast, said Gale Ross, the state's fall foliage spokesperson.

### 3 more wolves killed for attacking cattle

**OR** BAKER CITY — Employees from the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife shot and killed three more wolves from the Lookout Mountain pack on Wednesday, officials said.

Two 6-month-olds and one yearling were shot from a helicopter in eastern Oregon, The Baker City Herald reported.

The agency says it has now killed eight wolves from the pack, which has killed at least seven head of cattle and injured three others in eastern Baker County since mid-July. The colored breeding female and up to two juvenile wolves remain, officials said.

### Firm gets early OK for tunnel transit plan

**NV** LAS VEGAS — A company headed by

Tesla Inc. chief Elon Musk passed a hurdle Wednesday in its plan to drill an underground motorway beneath the Las Vegas Strip that could one day also link the city's busy international airport and downtown casino mall.

The Clark County Commission unanimously approved a special use permit for The Boring Co. to submit plans for some 29 miles of twin tunnels dubbed the Vegas Loop.

An overall cost wasn't disclosed. Las Vegas Convention and Tourism Authority chief Steve Hill said the plan could cost up to \$1 billion and will be privately funded.

The tunnel system would connect with an existing Convention Center Loop the company began operating in June. It whisks trade show attendees in Tesla electric vehicles between stops on the expanded Las Vegas Convention Center campus.

### Juneteenth could be court holiday in state

**MI** LANSING — The Michigan Supreme Court is considering a statewide court holiday on Juneteenth, which commemorates the end of slavery.

The court said it will accept public comment and hold a hearing in the months ahead.

Juneteenth commemorates June 19, 1865, when Union soldiers brought the news of freedom to enslaved Black people in Galveston, Texas, two months after the Confederacy had surrendered. It was about 2½ years after the Emancipation Proclamation freed slaves in Southern states.

The Supreme Court said it's

willing to consider dropping another court holiday to make room for Juneteenth or simply add Juneteenth to the roster.

### Ex-prosecutor faces meth-dealing charges

**IN** NEW CASTLE — The attorney for an eastern Indiana county who once served as its top prosecutor has been charged with dealing methamphetamines.

Martin R. Shields, 67, was arrested Tuesday and charged in Henry Circuit Court with two counts of dealing in meth and two counts of possession of meth. Shields, of New Castle, was released from the county jail after posting a \$25,000 surety bond and a \$2,200 cash bond.

Court documents allege that an informant wearing audio- and video-recording equipment for the Henry County Area Drug Task Force obtained meth from Shields during transactions earlier this month, The Star Press reported.

That person had allegedly been to Shields' home "on several occasions and observed methamphetamines in plain view and had been given (meth) in the past, sometimes for money and sometimes for free," according to court records.

### Death in canal was accidental drowning

**AZ** SCOTTSDALE — A 23-year-old man whose body was found in a Scottsdale canal in July apparently was intoxicated and drove a rented scooter into the water, according to authorities.

Scottsdale police said Wednesday that Robert "Bob-

by" Cuillo's death has been ruled an accidental drowning by the Maricopa County Medical Examiner's Office.

They said the medical examiner's report showed that Cuillo's blood alcohol level was above the legal limit for operating a motor vehicle. His body was found July 19, two days after he was reported missing.

Police said they were able to acquire the GPS and tracking information from the scooter Cuillo rented through his phone.

### Man to stop sending sweepstakes ads

**RI** PROVIDENCE — A Providence man has agreed to stop sending mail-order sweepstakes solicitations over accusations that he scammed \$10 million from vulnerable people.

Michael Shine, a resident of Warwick, made a deal with prosecutors prohibiting him from participating in mailing solicitations and advertisements, The Providence Journal reported.

Shine did not admit to any fraud accusations in the agreement but he must inform federal authorities of any mass-mailing activity and report any new mailing addresses for the next few years.

Prosecutors alleged that Shine and his wife Meagan Shine scammed people in a predatory mail fraud scheme that targeted vulnerable people.

The Shines used fake mailers to collect fees from people and in return, the people were to collect prizes and winnings that they never received, prosecutors said.

— From Associated Press

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# Taylor, Dodgers top Braves in Game 5

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — For a guy who dislikes drama, Chris Taylor sure provided plenty of it.

Taylor hit three homers and drove in six runs, joining the likes of Reggie Jackson and Babe Ruth in October baseball lore, as the Dodgers broke loose at the plate to beat Atlanta 11-2 on Thursday, cutting the Braves' lead to 3-2 in the best-of-seven NL Championship Series.

"It's cool. It's definitely a surreal feeling for me," Taylor said. "I never thought I was going to hit three homers in a game, let alone a post-season game, and it just still hasn't really sunk in."

AJ Pollock had two home runs and four RBIs for the defending champion Dodgers, who have won seven straight postseason elimination games dating to last season. They also trailed 0-2 and 1-3 against Atlanta in the NLCS last year before rallying to win three straight at a neutral site in Texas.

"We needed to make a statement," the mild-mannered Taylor said. "They put it on us yesterday. We had to respond."

Game 6 is Saturday in Atlanta, where the Braves get two more chances to clinch their first trip to the World Series since 1999.

"I guess when our backs are against the wall we play our best and fight, but that's just not an ideal spot to be in," Los Angeles manager Dave Roberts said.

After mustering only four hits during a 9-2

loss in Game 4 that pushed them to the brink of elimination, the desperate Dodgers rapped out eight hits by the third inning off Max Fried. They finished with 17, a club record for a postseason game, and also equaled a post-season franchise mark with five home runs.

Los Angeles got to Fried with four consecutive hits in the second. Pollock hit a tying homer and Taylor drove the first pitch he saw to left field, putting the team in front for good, 3-2.

Starting in place of injured Justin Turner at third base, Taylor became the second Dodgers player with a three-homer game in the playoffs. Kiké Hernández also did it in Game 5 of the 2017 NLCS against the Chicago Cubs at Wrigley Field as Los Angeles won its first pennant in 29 years.

Taylor had an RBI single in the third to make it 4-2. He went deep in the fifth, sending an 0-2 pitch from Chris Martin to center field and extending the lead to 6-2.

Taylor homered again in the seventh, taking Dylan Lee out to left-center before taking a curtain call in the dugout.

"I never look cool doing anything," Taylor said.

The versatile veteran had an opportunity to match the major league mark of four home runs in a game, but struck out swinging to end the eighth.

"I was trying not to think about it," Taylor said. "Usually I'm just trying to hit line drives."

Taylor also hit a game-winning homer in

the bottom of the ninth inning against St. Louis in the NL wild-card game for the 106-win Dodgers.

"He's just super calm and he's so consistent for us," Pollock said. "Maybe the three home runs might have spiked his adrenaline, but probably not."

Albert Pujols wasn't just hugging, he was hitting, too.

The 41-year-old slugger got on base three times, including a walk, and scored twice on Taylor's homers. He got two singles for his third and fourth hits of the postseason in his second start. He had two hits in the NL Division Series against San Francisco.

Pujols has taken to greeting his younger teammates with bear hugs in the dugout after home runs, and they kept him busy.

The three-time MVP is among the 11 players with a three-homer game in the postseason. Ruth accomplished the feat twice in the World Series.

Los Angeles got a clutch performance from its bullpen, too, after opener Joe Kelly allowed a two-run homer to Freddie Freeman in the first and soon exited after 28 pitches with tightness in his right biceps that will sideline him for the rest of the postseason.

Evan Phillips, Alex Vesia, Brusdar Graterol, Blake Treinen, Corey Knebel and Kenley Jansen combined to allow just three hits the rest of the way.

Phillips struck out three in 1 ½ innings and picked up the win.

## Backups Keenum, Johnson help Browns edge Broncos

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — Baker Mayfield had the best seat in the house to watch the Browns' backups deliver.

Case Keenum stepped in for an injured Mayfield and made the most of his first start in two years, third-string back D'Ernest Johnson rushed for 146 yards and Cleveland overcame a short week and a long list of injuries to beat the Denver Broncos 17-14 on Thursday night.

Keenum didn't put up impressive stats (21 of 33 for 199 yards), but threw a touchdown pass and did enough — as did the Browns' maligned defense — to get Cleveland (4-3) a much-needed victory.

They survived without Mayfield, who sat out with a shoulder injury and could miss more time.

"Unfortunately, some people are going to get hurt," Keenum said after his first win since 2019. "At the same time, you love other young guys getting chances."

Johnson, playing because stars Nick Chubb and Kareem Hunt were both out with calf injuries, had the best game of his young career. He scored on a 4-yard run in the first half and picked up 52 yards on seven carries as the Browns chewed up the final 5:17 after the Broncos pulled within three.

Once he reached the end

zone, Johnson wasn't sure how to react.

"It's unexplainable," he said. "I wanted to celebrate but I didn't know what to do. It's been a long journey."

Denver couldn't stop Johnson and now it can't stop losing, either.

"The last drive was very frustrating," Broncos coach Vic Fangio said. "We loaded up against the run and we couldn't stop them."

Afterward, Johnson, who worked on a fishing boat when he wasn't drafted, got doused with water by his teammates in a raucous locker room celebration.

Johnson couldn't believe that

NBA superstar LeBron James tweeted about him in the game's final minutes.

"LeBron?" he said. "Man, that's my favorite basketball player. LeBron? That's amazing. That means a lot. Wow!"

Denver quarterback Teddy Bridgewater threw a pair of TD passes and gutted it out while playing with foot and quadriceps injuries. He finished 23 of 33 for 187 yards with one interception.

The Broncos (3-4) dropped their fourth straight game, and maybe as importantly, lost star linebacker Von Miller to a sprained ankle. The eight-time Pro Bowler missed all of 2020 with a dislodged ankle tendon.

# Curry's 45 paces Warriors past Clippers

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Stephen Curry raised his arms, waved to acknowledge the adoring fans as shot after shot dropped through the net and screamed in celebration — no trash about it.

Curry hit a go-ahead three-pointer with 56.8 seconds remaining to follow up a 30-footer less than a minute earlier, and he relished every bit of his 45-point home opener that lifted the Golden State Warriors over the Los Angeles Clippers 115-113 on Thursday night.

Curry bounced back from a sub-par outing in the season opener by his high standards.

"I never worry about my shot. Ever," he said.

The reigning NBA scoring champion even secured a key rebound with 36 seconds left before calmly converting a pair of free throws with less than 5 seconds left, scoring eight points over the final 1:54.

Fans cheered Curry well after the game ended until he finally disappeared down the tunnel.

"Steph Curry was just Steph Curry;

there's never been anybody like him," coach Steve Kerr said. "Those last two threes were ridiculous. ... I'm still blown away."

Chants of "MVP!" began late in the first quarter, and by the time the buzzer sounded to finish the initial period, Curry already had topped his total from two nights earlier with 25 points on 9-of-9 shooting and five three-pointers as Golden State built a 44-27 lead.

"I don't know if I've had a perfect start like that before, but it was just a good flow from the jump," Curry said.

Curry wound up 16 of 25 from the floor and 8-for-13 from deep with 10 rebounds.

**Heat 137, Bucks 95:** Tyler Herro scored 27 points in 24 minutes off the bench, Jimmy Butler added 21 and host Miami opened the season with an easy victory over NBA champion Milwaukee.

Bam Adebayo had 20 points and 13 rebounds for the Heat, who set team records for opening night scoring and opening night margin of victory. It was nearly the biggest margin of victory in any game — falling just short of a 43-point win over the Los Angeles

Clippers in 1994.

The previous team record for points in an opener was 128 points against Detroit in 1999, and the biggest margin of victory was 26 points over Orlando in 2000.

Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 15 points and Grayson Allen added 14 for the Bucks. Olympic gold medalist Khris Middleton had 10 points on 4-for-14 shooting for Milwaukee, which was without, among others, Jrue Holiday (right heel), Brook Lopez (back) and Bobby Portis (left hamstring). Miami outrebounded the Bucks 58-38.

**Hawks 113, Mavericks 87:** Cam Reddish scored 20 points, Trae Young added 19 and Atlanta began a season of high expectations with a rout of Luka Doncic and visiting Dallas, ruining the debut of coach Jason Kidd.

Coming off a surprising run to the Eastern Conference final, the Hawks took control of the game with a dominant third quarter, stretching a 51-44 halftime lead to 86-64 heading to the fourth.

After a sluggish start, Young scored 12 points and dished out nine assists in the decisive period.

## Unbeaten Bearcats put No. 2 ranking on line at Navy

Associated Press

Cincinnati coach Luke Fickell's unbeaten Bearcats handled their first two conference tests with ease.

Up next is Navy — and although the Midshipmen aren't having a good season, they always present some challenges for whoever is preparing to face them.

"Now we get a chance to really kind of move on to something completely different," Fickell said. "For those of you that have never prepared for a triple-option team, it is quite a unique week."

It's unique for a variety of reasons. Cincinnati moved up to No. 2 in The Associated Press Top 25 poll Sunday, its best ranking ever and the first time in more than a decade that a team from outside the traditional power conferences has been that high. Now the Bearcats play at Navy on Saturday. It's the first time the Mid-

shipmen are hosting a top five team since 1984.

"The last three years or so they've been the pinnacle of our league," Navy coach Ken Niumatalolo said. "It's a great opportunity to play against the No. 2 team in the country coming to our house. We recognize that."

The stakes for Cincinnati (6-0, 2-0 American Athletic Conference) have been clear for a while — at least since the Bearcats won at Notre Dame earlier this month. Keep winning, and an unbeaten record could lead to a spot in the College Football Playoff. Cincinnati can't afford a slip-up, and there's pressure to win as impressively as possible.

Lately, the Bearcats have done just that. After the Notre Dame game, they beat Temple 52-3, then routed Central Florida and new coach Gus Malzahn 56-21. Malzahn made a name for himself via his hurry-up offense. Cincinnati's next opponent obvious-

ly has a much different approach.

The Midshipmen (1-5, 1-3) did beat UCF as well, and they lost by seven the following week to a nationally ranked SMU team. Navy lost 35-17 to Memphis last week.

### Moving up

The Bearcats have never been higher than No. 4 in the AP poll until this season. They moved up to No. 3 last week and then took advantage of second-ranked Iowa's loss.

"It's obviously exciting, big time for the university, big time for the city," quarterback Desmond Ridder said. "But for us, we've just got to keep going week by week."

### A good sign for Navy?

The last time the Midshipmen hosted a top five team, No. 2 South Carolina came in undefeated and lost to Navy in 1984. The Midshipmen had a losing re-

cord before that game as well.

### Good sign for Cincinnati?

In 1976, No. 2 Pittsburgh came to play at Navy with a 6-0 record, the same as Cincinnati now. The Midshipmen were 1-5, same as this year. Pitt won 45-0 and stayed unbeaten the whole season, beating Georgia in the Sugar Bowl. Georgia, of course, is the only team currently ranked ahead of Cincinnati.

### Making more history

Cincinnati has scored 50 points in back-to-back games for the first time.

"Watching a little bit of Cincinnati's film, they're well rounded," Navy receiver Mychal Cooper said. "They have a good offense, have a good defense. They practice hard on special teams, they rally to the ball. I think that's what it takes to be No. 2."

# Oilers' McDavid tops 200 goals

Associated Press

GLENDALE, Ariz. — Connor McDavid and Leon Draisatl came up together through the Edmonton Oilers' system, putting up prodigious numbers nearly side by side.

The friends have continued the success in the NHL, so it seemed fitting they reached the same milestone only days apart.

McDavid scored twice to eclipse 200 career goals two nights after Draisatl, and the Oilers remained undefeated with a 5-1 victory over the winless Arizona Coyotes on Thursday night.

McDavid scored in the second period to hit the 200-goal mark and scored his sixth goal

in four games in the third. He also joined Wayne Gretzky as the only Edmonton players to have multiple points in the first four games of a season.

"To be going through this whole thing together, it's fun," said McDavid, who has 11 points. "It's special to be a part of that. We've grown very close, and it's fun on and off the ice with him."

Edmonton was sharp in its first regular-season game in the U.S. since March 5, 2020, due to the pandemic, scoring at least five goals for the third straight game.

Mikko Koskinen had 25 saves in his first start since Mike Smith went on injured reserve

with a lower-body injury. Zach Hyman had short-handed and power-play goals in the same game for the first time in his career. Warren Foegele also scored for the Oilers.

"We've been getting contributions throughout the lineup a little more than last year, so we're off to a decent start, but we've got a lot of work to do yet," Edmonton coach Dave Tippett said.

So does Arizona.

The Coyotes had a strong first period despite giving up a late goal but were on their heels after Hyman scored his short-handed goal in the second period.

# Kotkaniemi helps lead Canes past Canadiens

Associated Press

MONTREAL — Jesperi Kotkaniemi scored his first goal for the Carolina Hurricanes in his return Thursday to Montreal, helping them beat the winless Canadiens, 4-1.

The 21-year-old Kotkaniemi left Montreal for Carolina over the summer after signing a \$6.1 million offer sheet. The Finn was booed every time he touched the ice, let alone the puck.

With 10:37 to go, Kotkaniemi tipped in a shot from Brady Skjei to restore the Canes' two-goal lead.

Sebastian Aho had two goals and an assist, Andrei Svechnikov also scored and Vincent Trocheck and Teuvo Teravainen each had two assists.

Frederik Andersen made 27 saves, allowing only Tyler Toffoli's goal.

Jake Allen made 29 saves as the Canadiens dropped to 0-5-0 after reaching the Stanley Cup Finals last season.

**Sharks 2, Senators 1:** Logan Couture and Kevin Labanc scored in the second period and James Reimer made 30 saves in San Jose's victory at Ottawa.

The Sharks improved to 3-

0-0. They have outscored opponents 11-4.

Drake Batherson scored for the Senators.

Brady Tkachuk and goaltender Matt Murray made their season debut for Ottawa. Tkachuk, who signed a new contract last week, assisted on Batherson's goal. Murray made 22 saves after missing the first three games with the flu.

**Capitals 4, Devils 1:** Daniel Sprong set up Washington's first goal and scored on a second-period breakthrough in a victory at New Jersey.

Anthony Mantha, Dmitry Orlov and Evgeny Kuznetsov also scored to help the Capitals improve to 3-0-1 and drop the Devils to 2-1-0. Alex Ovechkin had his three-game goals streak snapped but had two assists.

**Blue Jackets 3, Islanders 2 (OT):** Patrik Laine scored at 1:49 of overtime to lift host Columbus past New York.

Laine's wrist shot from the left circle sent him tumbling to the ice and beat Ilya Sorokin. Elvis Merzlikins made 28 saves as the Blue Jackets improved to 3-1. Mathew Barzal scored early in the third period for the Islanders to tie it after Columbus tal-

lied twice in 33 seconds to end the second.

**Rangers 3, Predators 1:**

Alexis Lafrenière scored with 9:07 remaining in the third period to lift New York to a win at Nashville.

Filip Chytil and Barclay Goodrow also scored and Igor Shesterkin made 28 saves for the Rangers, winners of three straight.

**Canucks 4, Blackhawks 1:**

Jason Dickinson, Tanner Pearson and Brock Boeser scored their first goals of the season to help Vancouver win at winless Chicago.

Thatcher Demko made 29 saves, and Conor Garland added an empty-netter for the Canucks in the fifth game of a six-game trip, their longest to start a season in team history.

**Jets 5, Ducks 1:** Kyle Connor scored twice and added an assist with regular linemates Blake Wheeler and Mark Scheifele in COVID-19 protocol and host Winnipeg beat Anaheim for its first victory of the season.

**Flames 3, Red Wings 0:** Jacob Markstrom made 33 saves for his ninth career NHL shut-out in Calgary's victory at Detroit.

# US women tie S. Korea, snap home win streak

Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Kan. — The U.S. women's national team had its 22-match winning streak on home soil snapped Thursday night in a scoreless draw against a surprisingly resilient South Korean team.

The Americans were one win away from matching the longest home streak in team history, set from April 1993 to February 1996.

The U.S. is still unbeaten in 61 matches at home, which includes 55 wins and six draws. It was the first time in 60 games on home soil that the team failed to score.

# US rowing coach Teti steps down from job

OAKLAND, Calif. — Long-time U.S. rowing coach Mike Teti, who has been criticized by some of his former athletes as being emotionally abusive and using physical intimidation, has resigned but immediately accepted a position funded by a large donor leading a new high-performance training club that still has ties to the national program.

# Congress wants WFT investigation documents

A Congressional committee is seeking documents and information from the NFL regarding the investigation into the Washington Football Team and how the league handled it.

The House Committee on Oversight and Reform said Thursday it sent a letter to Commissioner Roger Goodell requesting by Nov. 4 all documents and communication about the probe into the workplace culture at the Washington Football Team.