

US won't send Ukraine all weapons it wants

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Ukrainian leaders are pressing the U.S. and Western allies for air defense systems and longer-range weapons to keep up the momentum in their counteroffensive against Russia and fight back against Moscow's intensified attacks.

Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin on Wednesday said allies are committed to sending weapons "as fast as we can physically get them there." And he said defense leaders meeting in Brussels are working to send a wide array of systems, ranging from tanks and armored vehicles to air defense and artillery.

But there are still a number of high-profile, advanced weapons that Ukraine wants and the U.S. won't provide, due to political sensitivities, classified technology or limited stockpiles.

In a meeting with about 50 defense leaders this week, Austin and Army Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, discussed plans to send more air defense weapons to Uk-

raine and also increase training for Ukrainian troops.

"We know that Ukraine still needs even more long-range fires, and air defense systems and artillery systems along with other crucial capabilities," Austin said Wednesday. He said allies talked about a number of air defense systems.

The U.S. has already provided 20 of the advanced High Mobility Artillery Rocket System, or HIMARS, and has promised 18 more.

And the Pentagon has said it will deliver the first two advanced NASAMS surface-to-air missile systems to Ukraine in the coming weeks, providing Kyiv with a weapon that it has pressed for since earlier this year. The systems will provide medium-to-long-range defenses against Russian missile attacks.

Germany is now delivering its first IRIS-T surface-to-air missile system, which has a range of about 25 miles. It has promised a total of four.

Overall, the U.S. has sent Ukraine \$16.8 billion in weapons

and other aid since the war began on Feb. 24. That aid has included hundreds of armored vehicles, 142 155 mm Howitzers and 880,000 rounds of ammunition for them, plus thousands of Javelin anti-tank and Stinger anti-aircraft weapons and 60 million rounds of bullets.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has repeatedly made it clear that his country needs more advanced weapons to continue the fight. Russia launched a barrage of attacks using drones, heavy artillery and missiles this week.

Zelenskyy's pleas for some weapons, however, are so far going unanswered.

A key request is for the Army Tactical Missile System. Known as ATACMS, it is one of the weapons that Zelenskyy has repeatedly requested. It would give Ukraine the ability to strike Russian targets from as far as about 180 miles.

The system uses the same launchers as the HIMARS rockets that Kyiv has successfully used in its counteroffensive, but

has as much as three times the range of those rockets.

A major U.S. concern is that the longer-range capability could be used against targets inside Russia and further provoke Putin, said Brad Bowman, the senior director of the Center on Military and Political Power at the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, a Washington-based nonpartisan research institute.

Similarly, the U.S. isn't likely to send Ukraine the highly sophisticated surface-to-air Patriot missile system, which has the ability to shoot down incoming ballistic missiles.

Zelenskyy has also pressed the U.S. since March to provide fighter jets such as F-16s, but the U.S. has repeatedly rejected the idea to avoid further escalation with Russia.

The U.S. also has so far declined to send Ukraine more sophisticated longer-range drones, such as the Gray Eagle, which also would give Ukraine a longer-distance strike capability.

NATO to deliver 'hundreds of drone jammers' to Ukraine

By JOHN VANDIVER

Stars and Stripes

Western allies said Thursday they will rush special weaponry into Ukraine to help Kyiv neutralize drones that the Russian military is relying on to attack cities and civilian targets across the country.

"NATO will shortly deliver counterdrone equipment to Ukraine, with hundreds of drone jammers, which can help render ineffective Russian and Iranian-made drones, and to protect Ukrainian people and critical infrastructure," NATO Secretary-Gen-

eral Jens Stoltenberg said.

Stoltenberg's comments came at the conclusion of two days of talks at alliance headquarters in Brussels, where allies were focused on beefing up air defenses not only in Ukraine but on NATO turf.

More than a dozen NATO countries are now on board with plans to launch the European Sky Shield, a new air defense initiative on the eastern side of the Atlantic. They signed a letter of intent Thursday at NATO headquarters in Brussels during a meeting of defense ministers.

"This commitment is even more crucial today as we witness the ruthless and indiscriminate missile attacks by Russia in Ukraine, killing civilians and destroying critical infrastructure," NATO Deputy Secretary-General Mircea Geoana said in a statement.

Germany is slated to lead the effort through a shared acquisition strategy. It wasn't clear Thursday when NATO intends the initiative to begin operations, or what weapons systems it will include.

The 14 NATO allies that signed

on to the plan are Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Slovakia, Slovenia, Romania and the United Kingdom.

Finland, still awaiting the unanimous approval of member states required for entrance into NATO, also is part of the effort.

The assets are expected to integrate into NATO's broader air and missile defense network, enhancing the allies' ability to defend their collective territory from air and missile threats, alliance officials said.

S. Korea prefers positioning US assets to deploying nukes

BY DAVID CHOI
Stars and Stripes

CAMP HUMPHREYS, South Korea — Positioning U.S. strategic assets in South Korea is preferable to deploying nuclear arms there to match the threat from North Korea, a senior defense official in Seoul said Thursday.

It is “most desirable” to deter the North using “U.S. strategic assets currently available on the Korean Peninsula,” rather than deploying U.S. tactical nuclear weapons, Vice Minister of National Defense Shin Beom Chul told SBS Radio on Thursday.

The United States has roughly 28,500 troops stationed in South Korea as well as a state-of-the-art Terminal High Altitude Area Defense, or THAAD, system capable of intercepting ballistic missiles.

The defense ministry has primarily focused on the timely deployment of “strategic assets” in South Korea, rather than a “nuclear sharing” agreement with the U.S., Shin said.

His comments follow a call by the leader of the ruling People Power Party to scrap a 1991 inter-Korean denuclearization agreement that prohibits the South from possessing or producing nuclear weapons.

The agreement should be abolished if North Korea conducts its seventh nuclear test, Chung Jin-suk wrote Wednesday on his personal Facebook page.

U.S. and South Korean officials have said North Korea, which has fired more than 40 missiles in 25 rounds of tests so far this year, is also prepared to test its first nuclear device since 2017.

The communist regime last fired two cruise missiles on Wednesday, according to North Korean state-run media and the South’s Ministry of National Defense. The North alarmed world leaders by launching a ballistic missile over Japan on Oct. 3.

A potential nuclear weapons program in South Korea would be at odds with existing U.S. policy. U.S. administrations under Presidents Joe Biden and Donald Trump have consistently stressed that the White House goal in the region is to rid the Korean Peninsula of nuclear weapons entirely.

“We will seek sustained diplomacy with North Korea to make tangible progress toward the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, while strengthening extended deterrence in the face of North Korean weapons of mass destruction and missile threats,” said Biden’s National Security Strategy released on Wednesday.

North Korea fires missile; warplanes fly near the border

Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korea on Friday launched a ballistic missile toward its eastern waters and flew warplanes near the border with South Korea, the South’s military said, further raising animosities triggered by the North’s recent barrage of weapons tests.

South Korea’s Joint Chiefs of Staff said the launch happened early Friday but gave no further details including how far the weapon flew.

The Japanese Defense Ministry and prime minister’s office also tweeted that North Korea launched a possible missile.

It’s the latest in a spate of missile launches by North Korea in recent weeks. North Korea said Thursday that leader Kim Jong Un supervised the test-launches of long-range cruise missiles that he said successfully demonstrated his military’s expanding nuclear strike capabilities.

North Korea said earlier this week that its missile tests in the past two weeks were simulated nuclear attacks on key South Korean and U.S. targets. North Korea said the weapons tests were meant as a warning to Seoul and Washington for staging “dangerous” joint naval exercises involving a U.S. aircraft carrier.

The North Korean launches, part of its record-breaking run of weapons tests this year, were seen as an attempt by Kim to acquire a more intimidating arsenal to pressure its rivals to accept his country as a legitimate nuclear state and lift economic sanctions.

South Korea’s Joint Chiefs of Staff also said in a statement that North Korea had flown warplanes near the rivals’ border late Thursday and early Friday, prompting South Korea to scramble fighter jets.

The North Korean planes flew as close as 7 miles north of the inter-Korean border.

The South Korean Joint Chiefs of Staff said it responded by scrambling F-35 jets and other warplanes. There were no reports of clashes.

Analysts say Kim is exploiting the distraction created by Russia’s war on Ukraine, using it as a window to accelerate arms development as he pursues a full-fledged nuclear arsenal.

Search underway for US sailor gone missing from Spanish town

BY ALISON BATH
Stars and Stripes

The U.S. Navy and Spanish police are investigating the disappearance of a 31-year-old sailor missing for nearly a week from his home near Naval Station Rota.

Lt. j.g. Eric Caldwell was last seen Oct. 7 in Chipiona, a small town on Spain’s Atlantic coast about 10 miles north of the base, said Lt. j.g. Charena Comacho, a base spokeswoman.

Navy officials are working with Chipiona police in the search, and the case also is being investigated by the Naval Criminal In-

vestigative Service, she said.

It’s unclear exactly when Caldwell went missing, where he was or what he was doing. He lives in Chipiona, Comacho said.

Caldwell is a physician assistant at U.S. Naval Hospital Rota, according to the hospital Facebook page, which posted photos of him at an Oct. 6 celebration.

He is about 5 feet, 8 inches tall with a slim build, brown hair and blue eyes. He was last seen wearing blue shorts and a long-sleeved white shirt with small blue polka dots, according to a story published Tuesday by the newspaper Viva Rota.

Jan. 6 panel focuses on Trump ‘betrayal’

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A defeated Donald Trump orchestrated a multi-part plan to overturn the 2020 presidential election in a “staggering betrayal of his oath” resulting in the 2021 attack at the Capitol, the Jan. 6 committee declared Thursday.

Statements from Chairman Bennie Thompson and Vice Chair Liz Cheney at the panel’s final public session of the year were laden with language frequently seen in criminal indictments.

Both lawmakers described Trump as “substantially” involved in the events of Jan. 6. Cheney said Trump had acted in a “premeditated” way.

To illustrate what it said were “purposeful lies,” the committee juxtaposed repeated instances in which top administration officials recounted telling Trump the actual facts with clips of him repeating the exact opposite at his pre-riot rally at the Ellipse on Jan. 6.

The panel warned that the insurrection at the Capitol was not an isolated incident but a warning of the fragility of the nation’s de-

mocracy in the post-Trump era.

“None of this is normal or acceptable or lawful in a republic,” Republican Rep. Cheney said.

“There is no defense that Donald Trump was duped or irrational. No president can defy the rule of law and act this way in a constitutional republic, period.”

The 10th public session, just weeks before the congressional midterm elections, was delving into Trump’s “state of mind,” said Thompson.

The committee is starting to sum up its findings that Trump, after losing the 2020 presidential election, launched an unprecedented attempt to stop Congress from certifying Joe Biden’s victory. The result was the mob storming of the Capitol.

The committee may well make a decision on whether to make a criminal referral to the Justice Department, though Cheney said she recognized that the panel’s job was not to make prosecutorial decisions.

Thursday’s hearing opened at a mostly empty Capitol complex, with most lawmakers at home campaigning for reelection.

Several people who were among the thousands around the Capitol on Jan. 6 are now running for congressional office, some with Trump’s backing. Police officers who fought the mob filled the hearing room’s front row.

The session was serving as a closing argument for the panel’s two Republican lawmakers, Cheney of Wyoming and Adam Kinzinger of Illinois, who have essentially been shunned by Trump and their party and will not be returning in the new Congress. Cheney lost her primary election, and Kinzinger decided not to run.

Another committee member, Rep. Elaine Luria, D-Va., a retired Naval commander, is in a tough reelection bid against state Sen. Jen Kiggans, a former Navy helicopter pilot.

The panel was expected to share information from its recent interviews — including testimony from Ginni Thomas, the conservative activist and wife of Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas. She was in contact with the White House during the run-up to Jan. 6.

Parkland school shooter to receive life sentence

Associated Press

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. — Florida school shooter Nikolas Cruz will be sentenced to life without parole for the 2018 murder of 17 people at Parkland’s Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, after the jury said Thursday that it could not unanimously agree that he should be executed — a decision that left some parents in tears as they exited the courtroom.

The jury’s recommendation came after seven hours of deliberations over two days, ending a three-month trial that included graphic videos, photos and testimony from the massacre and its aftermath, heart-wrenching testimony from victims’ family members and a tour of the still blood-spattered building.

Under Florida law, a death sentence requires a unanimous vote on at least one count. Cir-

cuit Judge Elizabeth Scherer will formally issue the life sentences Nov. 1.

Relatives, along with the students and teachers Cruz wounded, will be given the opportunity to speak at the sentencing hearing.

Cruz, his hair unkempt, largely sat hunched over and stared at the table as the jury’s recommendations were read. Rumbles grew from the family section — packed with about three dozen parents, spouses and other relatives of the victims — as life sentences were announced.

Cruz, 24, pleaded guilty a year ago to murdering 14 students and three staff members and wounding 17 others on Feb. 14, 2018. Cruz said he chose Valentine’s Day to make it impossible for Stoneman Douglas students to celebrate the holiday ever again.

Trial: Tweet about ‘wild’ protest energized extremists

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Members of the far-right Oath Keepers were ecstatic when then-President Donald Trump invited supporters to a “wild” protest in Washington on Jan. 6, 2021, when Congress would be certifying the results of the 2020 election, according to messages shown Thursday during the seditious conspiracy trial for the militia group’s founder and four associates.

During an FBI agent’s testimony, jurors saw a string of online posts that Oath Keepers members in Florida exchanged after Trump’s tweet on Dec. 19, 2020, about a “big protest” at the upcoming joint session of Congress on Jan. 6. “Be there, will be wild!” Trump said.

“He wants us to make it WILD,” Kelly Meggs, an Oath Keepers leader from Dunnellon, Fla., wrote in a message to

other group members. “He called us all to the Capitol and wants us to make it wild!!! Sir Yes Sir!!!”

Trump’s words appeared to energize Oath Keepers members. They used an encrypted messaging app to discuss their plans to be in the nation’s capital on Jan. 6, when, after a Trump rally near the White House, a mob stormed the Capitol and disrupted Congress from certifying Democrat Joe Biden’s victory over the Republican incumbent.

Graydon Young, an Oath Keepers member from Florida who has pleaded guilty to a conspiracy charge, said he was going to Washington even though it “feels like a fool’s errand.” Oath Keepers founder and national leader Stewart Rhodes responded on Dec. 25, 2020, that he disagreed with that assessment.

Jones ordered to pay \$965M for lies

Associated Press

WATERBURY, Conn. — Jurors ordered conspiracy theorist Alex Jones on Wednesday to pay nearly \$1 billion to Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting victims' relatives and an FBI agent, who said he turned their loss and trauma into years of torment by promoting the lie that the rampage was a hoax.

The \$965 million verdict is the second big judgment against the Infowars host for spreading the myth that the deadliest school shooting in U.S. history never happened, and that the grieving families seen in news coverage were actors hired as part of a plot to take away people's guns.

The verdict came in a defamation lawsuit filed by some of the families of 26 people who were killed in the 2012 shooting, plus an FBI agent who was among the first responders. A Texas jury in August awarded nearly \$50 million to the parents of another

slain child.

Robbie Parker, who lost his 6-year-old daughter, Emilie, said outside the Connecticut court that he was proud that "what we were able to accomplish was just to simply tell the truth."

"And it shouldn't be this hard, and it shouldn't be this scary," said Parker, who became an early target of conspiracy theorists after he spoke at a news conference the day after the shooting. The jury awarded him the most of any plaintiff: \$120 million.

Jones wasn't at court but reacted on his Infowars show.

As courtroom video showed the jury awards being read out, Jones said that he himself had never mentioned the plaintiffs' names.

"All made up. Hilarious," he said. "So this is what a show trial looks like. I mean, this is the left completely out of control."

Jones' lawyer, Norm Pattis, portrayed the trial as unfair and pledged to appeal.

"Today is a very, very, very dark day for freedom of speech," he said outside court.

The jury awarded various sums to the victims' relatives, who testified that they were threatened and harassed for years by people who believed the lies told on Jones' show. Strangers showed up at the families' homes to record them. People hurled abusive comments on social media.

To plaintiff William Sherlach, the verdict "shows that the internet is not the wild, wild West, and that your actions have consequences."

He had testified about seeing online posts that falsely posited that the shooting was a hoax; that his slain wife, school psychologist Mary Sherlach, never existed; that he was part of a financial cabal and somehow involved with the school shooter's father; and more.

US clears COVID booster for children as young as 5

Associated Press

The U.S. on Wednesday authorized updated COVID-19 boosters for children as young as 5, seeking to expand protection ahead of an expected winter wave.

Tweaked boosters rolled out for Americans 12 and older last month, doses modified to target today's most common and contagious omicron relative. While there wasn't a big rush, federal health officials are urging that people seek the extra protection ahead of holiday gatherings.

Now the Food and Drug Administration has given a green light for elementary school-age kids to get the updated booster doses, too — one made by Pfizer for 5- to 11-year-olds, and a version from rival Moderna for those as young as 6.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which recommends how vaccines are used, also signed off.

Americans may be tired of repeated calls to get boosted against COVID-19 but experts say the updated shots have an

advantage: They contain half the recipe that targeted the original coronavirus strain and half protection against the dominant BA.4 and BA.5 omicron versions.

These combination or "bivalent" boosters are designed to broaden immune defenses so that people are better protected against serious illness whether they encounter an omicron relative in the coming months — or a different mutant that's more like the original virus.

Saudis: US urged 1 month delay of OPEC+ oil cuts

Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Saudi Arabia said Thursday that the U.S. had urged the kingdom to postpone a decision by OPEC and its allies — including Russia — to cut oil production by a month. Such a delay could have helped reduce the risk of a spike in gas prices ahead of the U.S. mid-term elections next month.

A statement issued by the Saudi Foreign Ministry didn't specifically mention the Nov. 8 elections in which President Joe Biden is trying to maintain his narrow Democratic majority in Congress. However, it stated that the U.S. "suggested" the

cuts be delayed by a month. In the end, OPEC announced the cuts at its Oct. 5 meeting in Vienna.

Rising oil prices — and by extension higher gasoline prices — have been a key driver of inflation in the U.S. and around the world, worsening global economic woes as Russia's months-long war on Ukraine also has disrupted global food supplies. For Biden, gasoline prices creeping up could affect voters. He and many lawmakers have warned that America's long-time security-based relationship with the kingdom could be reconsidered.

Saudi Arabia issuing a rare, lengthy

statement shows just how tense relations are between the two countries.

The White House pushed back on Thursday, rejecting the idea that the requested delay was related to the U.S. elections and instead linking it to economic considerations and Russia's war on Ukraine.

"We presented Saudi Arabia with analysis to show that there was no market basis to cut production targets, and that they could easily wait for the next OPEC meeting to see how things developed," said John Kirby, coordinator for strategic communications at the National Security Council.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Toddler left behind in locked rental car

FL DAYTONA BEACH — A toddler was left behind accidentally in a locked rental car when it was returned by her grandfather to a central Florida airport, and she wasn't discovered by an employee until 45 minutes later, authorities said Tuesday.

The girl, who is less than 2 years old, was found in a car in the return lot by a Hertz employee at Daytona Beach International Airport on Monday evening, according to the Volusia County Sheriff's Office.

"The child was scared and hot, but thankfully in good health when checked by paramedics," the sheriff's office said in a statement.

Not long after the girl was discovered, her mother called to say that her father had left her daughter accidentally in the rental car while babysitting her and that she was on her way to be reunited with her daughter, the sheriff's office said.

The grandfather was charged with one count of child neglect. He "was remorseful and cooperative with deputies," the sheriff's office said.

3 window workers rescued from high-rise

IN INDIANAPOLIS — Three workers whose scaffold became stuck outside the 19th floor of a downtown Indianapolis high-rise as they were repairing windows were rescued hours later by firefighters, officials said.

The three window glaziers became stuck about 8 p.m. Monday when a steel cable they

were using to raise and lower a 300-pound window slipped off a pulley outside the 36-story Regions Tower.

After the men tried unsuccessfully for two hours to get the cable back onto the pulley, they called the Indianapolis Fire Department for help about 10 p.m., fire officials said.

Firefighters spent two hours setting up a high-angle rope system. The teams were eventually able to raise the window enough to release the tension on the cable and place it back over the pulley just before midnight, officials said.

The scaffold and the workers were lowered to the building's 5th-floor deck about 12:10 a.m. Tuesday.

Museums return African bronzes to Nigeria

RI PROVIDENCE — A bronze sculpture of a West African king that had been in the collection of a Rhode Island museum for more than 70 years was among 31 culturally precious objects that were returned to the Nigerian government on Tuesday.

The Benin Bronzes including a piece called the "Head of a King" or "Oba" from the Rhode Island School of Design Museum, were transferred to the Nigerian National Collections during a ceremony at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.

The pieces that were stolen by the British in the late 19th century included 29 that the Smithsonian Institution's Board of Regents voted in June to return, and one object from the National Gallery of Art, officials said.

The repatriation is part of a worldwide movement by cultural institutions to return artifacts that were often stolen during colonial wars. In August, the Horniman Museum and Gardens in London announced that it would transfer a collection of 72 Benin Bronzes to the Nigerian government.

The Benin Bronzes were stolen in 1897 when British forces sacked the Benin kingdom, which is now in modern-day Nigeria.

Dynamite truck explosion at quarry injures 5

PA MUIR — Authorities say at least five people were reported injured in an explosion at a quarry in eastern Pennsylvania.

Emergency officials in Schuylkill County said the 11:45 a.m. Monday blast reportedly occurred on a dynamite truck at the Summit Quarry in Porter Township.

One person was flown from the scene to a hospital and four others were taken by road for medical treatment.

State police and a fire marshal are investigating the blast.

Ski resort owner vows to rebuild after fire at lodge

MN CALLAWAY — Fire has destroyed the main lodge at a popular ski resort in northwestern Minnesota.

Officials say the main building at Mapelag, which caught fire Monday morning, is expected to be declared a total loss. The cause of the fire near Callaway, is under investigation.

It's the second time in 23 years that fire has burned the

lodge. In December 1999, the resort's main building was destroyed by a late night fire. The Richards family, which owns the resort, closed it for the winter and rebuilt, just as they plan to do once again, KSTP-TV reported.

Jim Richards says he was catching up on emails Monday morning and getting ready for the upcoming ski season when he heard a loud sound. Richards believes the fire may have started in the laundry room.

Statue of Liberty's crown reopens after 2½ years

NY NEW YORK — One of New York's most popular attractions has reopened to the public.

The National Park Service began allowing visitors to go up into the Statue of Liberty's crown on Tuesday, more than 2½ years since it closed during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020. Other parts of the statue including the observation deck had reopened previously.

Due to the popularity of the crown, visitors are required to make reservations in advance and there is a limited number of tickets available each day. As of Tuesday evening, the first available tickets were for early November.

Situated in New York Harbor overlooking New York and New Jersey, the statue routinely drew more than 4 million visitors in the several years leading up to the pandemic. About 1.5 million visited in 2021, according to the Department of the Interior.

— From wire reports



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Machado, Padres hold off Dodgers

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Not many tabbed the San Diego Padres to beat the Mets in New York in the wild-card round. Even fewer picked them against the Los Angeles Dodgers, who have dominated the Padres in recent years and were baseball's best team during the regular season.

But they're all even now.

Manny Machado homered early and added an RBI double off Clayton Kershaw, and Jurickson Profar singled home the go-ahead run as San Diego defeated the Dodgers 5-3 on Wednesday to tie their NL Division Series at one game apiece.

"We're going to compete," Machado said. "We're going to try to do everything possible to help our team win every single day. That's what we started in New York, and we're going to continue to do that until we're not."

The wild-card Padres beat the rival Dodgers for the first time in the postseason. San Diego was swept 3-0 by the Dod-

gers in a 2020 Division Series and lost Game 1 of this playoff Tuesday.

"It's probably as back and forth a game as you are going to see," Padres manager Bob Melvin said. "A lot of drama to it. Fun win."

Dropped from first to seventh in the batting order for matchup purposes, Profar grounded a single to right field in the sixth inning off reliever Brusdar Graterol, who took the loss. Jake Cronenworth scored for a 4-3 lead.

Cronenworth homered off Blake Treinen in the eighth to give San Diego some insurance, and Josh Hader earned his first four-out save since August 2020 with Milwaukee.

"This team all year, we've been grinding," Machado said.

Freddie Freeman, Max Muncy and Trea Turner went deep for the NL West champion Dodgers.

The best-of-five series resumes with Game 3 on Friday in San Diego.

"Don't take anybody lightly in the postseason," Freeman said. "They're here for a reason. They play good baseball, they played really good against the Mets, and they just came out on top today."

The teams traded one-run leads on a night when two of baseball's elite pitchers — Kershaw and Yu Darvish of the Padres — got knocked around a bit. In the middle innings, it became a battle of the bullpens for the second straight game.

Hader, who got the final out of the eighth, gave up a two-out double to Freeman off the right-center wall in the ninth. That brought up Will Smith as the potential tying run at the plate. But he flied out to right to end the game.

"Freeman hits an 0-2 pitch that's up around his chin that I don't know how he even gets to," Melvin said, "and then all of a sudden you are one pitch away from being in trouble again."

The Dodgers' only lead was a

2-1 advantage in the second. Baseball's highest-scoring team in the regular season struggled to hit in the clutch.

"There were a couple of opportunities, two innings back-to-back, that we had an opportunity situationally to push a run across to tie the game, let alone to potentially take the lead, and we couldn't do that," manager Dave Roberts said. "Defensively it just wasn't clean, either."

Machado's double in the third tied it, and Cronenworth gave the Padres a 3-2 lead with an RBI groundout.

Turner's homer in the bottom half evened it again.

Darvish, who got the win, allowed three runs and seven hits in five-plus innings and had at least one baserunner in every inning. The right-hander struck out seven and walked two.

"We're in a playoff game, and I think bottom line is if we win the game, it's all good," Darvish said through a translator.

Wright outduels Wheeler, Braves get even in series

Associated Press

ATLANTA— This was a game the Atlanta Braves absolutely had to win.

They had the right guy on the mound.

Kyle Wright, baseball's only 20-game winner, threw six brilliant innings to outduel Zack Wheeler as the Braves evened their NL Division Series at one game apiece, blanking the Philadelphia Phillies 3-0 on Wednesday night.

After steady rain delayed the first pitch by nearly three hours, Wright surrendered just two hits and claimed the win when the Braves got to Wheeler for three runs in the bottom of the sixth.

The reigning World Series champions were in a must-win

situation after losing the opener of the best-of-five series 7-6.

The Braves turned to the right-hander with a big arm and snapping curveball who has finally cashed in on his enormous potential.

"I've worked on a lot of things this year," Wright said. "Really, it just goes back to confidence."

Wright, the fifth overall pick in the 2017 amateur draft, struggled to get past Triple-A and came into this season with a record of 2-8 in the majors. He totally turned that around, going 21-5 to collect three more wins than any other big league pitcher.

Wright kept it going in the playoffs. His only major threat came in the second, when Bryce Harper led off with a double,

then tagged and moved to third on a flyout to deep center by Nick Castellanos.

Harper had to scramble back to third on Alec Bohm's sharp grounder to first, and Brandon Marsh struck out swinging on a four-seamer that clocked in at 96 mph.

"As he's out there and figures things out, he's going to continue to develop and grow and gain confidence," Braves manager Brian Snitker said of Wright. "With that arsenal he's got, he can be a force for a long time."

A.J. Minter, Raisel Iglesias and Kenley Jansen closed out the three-hitter with one inning apiece.

Jansen earned the save, the 20th of his postseason career but first with the Braves after

spending the last dozen seasons with the Los Angeles Dodgers.

Game 3 is Friday in Philadelphia.

Dansby Swanson made a dazzling play to end the Phillies' sixth.

Sprinting with his back to the infield, the shortstop reached out to snare a pop fly from J.T. Realmuto while tumbling to the outfield grass. Wright threw both arms in the air when he realized Swanson had pulled off the catch.

It turned out to be the final pitch of Wright's 83-pitch gem, in which he struck out six with one walk.

Wright watched from the top step of the dugout as the Braves finally broke the scoreless tie in the bottom half.

Tide brace for big road test with Vols

Associated Press

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. — Tennessee coach Josh Heupel recognizes the enormous opportunity awaiting his sixth-ranked Volunteers only too well.

The No. 6 Volunteers host No. 3 Alabama (6-0, 3-0 SEC) on Saturday, and it's the first time since 1989 that both have been unbeaten going into the Third Saturday of October rivalry game. Tennessee (5-0, 2-0) is trying to crack college football's elite for the first time since 2006, when the Vols last beat Alabama.

"This is why you come to Tennessee and want to be in this league," Heupel said.

Alabama has been a regular atop the Southeastern Conference — not to mention winning six national titles — since hiring Nick Saban as head coach. He is 15-0 against Tennessee since then and he knows how crucial beating Tennessee is no matter the records.

"This game means a lot to a lot of people in Alabama," Saban said. "It's kind of a rivalry game."

That's an understatement, at least this season. The Vols are coming off a 40-13 win at LSU, while Alabama had to hold on to

beat Texas A&M 24-20, a win that dropped the Tide two spots from the No. 1 ranking.

The Vols see themselves as the Crimson Tide's biggest challenge though Heupel said: "The expectations we should be concerned about are our own expectations." Tennessee quarterback Hendon Hooker, now being mentioned in the Heisman Trophy conversation, said it's a matter of "just staying even-keeled."

Quarterback Bryce Young missed Alabama's win over Texas A&M with a sprained shoulder and was questionable at midweek. Redshirt freshman Jalen Milroe stepped in for the reigning Heisman Trophy winner and delivered an uneven performance against the Aggies.

Tennessee fans painted Neyland Stadium an orange-and-white checkerboard pattern for a win over Florida. That's what Alabama safety Jordan Battle is expecting, though all orange seems to be the color of choice for a game so big Tennessee has set up an outdoor watch party area for the sold-out game.

"We know it's going to be loud," Battle said. "I know we

probably haven't played the best on the road this year so this week will be a big emphasis of trying to play better on the road."

QB showdown

Young last played in the second quarter against Arkansas and will be evaluated all week. Milroe ran for 83 yards against A&M.

That could give the edge at that position to Tennessee. Hooker has completed 70% of his passes for 1,432 yards and 10 touchdowns without throwing an interception running the nation's top offense in yards and has passed Young in the midseason Heisman Trophy odds, according to FanDuel Sportsbook.

"He's always a threat to run it, too, which makes it more difficult, and they've got really good skill guys," Saban said of Hooker. "And their entire offensive team is very efficient in how they operate and how they execute."

Henry's return

Tide linebacker Henry To'o-To'o is playing in this game for the fourth time and second since transferring from the

Vols where he was a two-year starter. To'oTo'o had three tackles in two games against Alabama. He had five tackles in last season's game for the Tide and now returns to Neyland Stadium on the opposite sideline.

"Definitely super excited," To'oTo'o said. "So definitely going to be a huge challenge."

Turnover problem

Alabama coaches regularly talk about the records of teams with various turnover margins. The more turnovers, the uglier the records.

Alabama is defying the odds — so far — despite being in a three-way tie for 115th nationally with a minus-5 turnover margin. North Texas (3-3) and Kent State (2-4) are the other two. Saban insists they've been emphasizing holding onto the ball "like crazy."

"This is the first time in a long time we've had a negative turnover ratio at this point in a season," Saban said. "We don't get enough turnovers on defense, and we've given the ball up more than we have historically. And both of those things need to improve, because it is very, very challenging."

Penn State quarterback Clifford ready for Michigan

Associated Press

STATE COLLEGE, Pa. — Sean Clifford spent last week getting a head start for what he expects will be his biggest test of the season.

The extra week of practice and film study aside, Penn State's sixth-year quarterback has something else going for him as the No. 10 Nittany Lions prepare to visit No. 5 Michigan Saturday for a Big Ten East showdown.

He's healthy and feeling spry, fresh off a bye weekend spent with friends and family at a

pumpkin patch.

"It is nice to be able to have that time off," Clifford said.

He expects a rude welcome in The Big House, where the Wolverines haven't lost since Clifford and Penn State beat them in the finale of the 2020 season. The Wolverines currently have the country's fifth-best scoring defense and are fueled by their pass rush. They've got 14 sacks and 21 tackles for loss over their last three games and 18 total quarterback hurries.

"They look every part of one of the top defensive lines in the

country," Clifford said.

Penn State's offensive linemen, who have kept Clifford's uniform clean most of the season, are determined to do so again. They know it could be the difference moving forward.

"Cliff has played in plenty of these big games," guard Sal Wormley said. "He knows how to handle certain situations. It just overall builds up the confidence of the team when you know you've got somebody back there who's gonna be prepared, who's not gonna let the lights outshine him."

Last year, Clifford was dealing with multiple ailments during the bye week, recovering from a hard shot to the ribs that knocked him out of the team's Oct. 9 loss at Iowa. The Nittany Lions never recovered, losing five of their next seven.

Clifford didn't spend time during his break dwelling on his worst outing of the season, either.

He was just 10-for-20 in the rain in Penn State's 17-7 win over Northwestern, tossed a bad interception and nearly had two other passes picked off.

Avs raise banner, then beat Blackhawks

Associated Press

DENVER — Mikko Rantanen and his teammates logged a lot of extra ice time in the opener.

Well worth it, of course, to take part in the emotion-stirring, banner-raising ceremony before the game that lasted 20 or so minutes.

Artturi Lehkonen and Valeri Nichushkin each scored two power-play goals, Rantanen had four assists and the fast-skating Colorado Avalanche began their Stanley Cup title defense with a 5-2 victory over the Chicago Blackhawks on Wednesday night.

Shortly after raising their newest banner to the rafters, the Avalanche went to work. Andrew Cogliano scored Colora-

do's first goal of the season, the only goal in the game that wasn't on the power play. Nathan MacKinnon, fresh off a new lucrative contract, contributed two assists, while new goaltender Alexandar Georgiev stopped 15 shots.

"Our championship team is in the rafters forever," said Rantanen, who turned in the 12th four-point night of his career. "You don't think about it too much (now), but I think we will appreciate it later."

Jonathan Toews and Max Domi had goals as Luke Richardson made his coaching debut for the Blackhawks. Petr Mrazek finished with 30 saves against an Avalanche team that won the title last season by deth-

roning Tampa Bay in six games.

"Obviously it's special to see that banner go up there, to contribute to history," Toews said. "But I think once the puck drops the attitude is it's behind you and nobody really cares. You got to go out there and try to win the game."

The crowd was revved up well before the puck even dropped.

The appetizer: A highlight video of Colorado's run to the franchise's third Stanley Cup title. Then, some music as Mark Hoppus of the band Blink-182 led a sing-along of the band's tune "All The Small Things," which became an anthem for the Avalanche.

There also was captain Ga-

briel Landeskog hoisting the Cup and skating around with the trophy (he missed the game with a lower-body injury). Of course, there were plenty of on-ice pictures, including a memorable shot of the team with Blackhawks defenseman Jack Johnson joining in. Johnson was with Colorado last season.

Finally, the feature attraction — the banner raised to the rafters. As it climbed higher and higher, the cheers got louder and louder.

"I got pretty emotional actually when they're doing the video beforehand," said Johnson, who was wearing his championship ring in his postgame interview. "Some day I can bring my grandkids or my kids."

McDavid hat trick in opener lifts Oilers over Canucks

Associated Press

EDMONTON, Alberta — Connor McDavid had three goals and an assist and the Edmonton Oilers overcame an early 3-0 deficit to beat the Vancouver Canucks 5-3 on Wednesday night.

Leon Draisaitl added a goal and two assists and Darnell Nurse also scored for the Oilers in the opener for both teams. Jack Campbell made 33 saves.

"It wasn't according to anyone's script, for sure," said Edmonton head coach Jay Woodcroft. "I don't think we were sharp. I don't think we were in sync early. We found a way to win the game, that's a really good sign, but we can be better."

Elias Pettersson, J.T. Miller and Andrei Kuzmenko — in his NHL debut — scored for the Canucks. Thatcher Demko stopped 20 shots.

Pettersson and Miller scored in an early 51-second span and Kuzmenko made it 3-0 39 seconds into the second on a power play. He's the first player in Canucks history to score a power-

play goal in his debut.

"That was pretty disappointing. I thought we came out pretty good in the first and special teams kind of cost us the game," said Canucks defenseman Oliver Ekman-Larsson. "The power play wasn't good enough and we couldn't keep the puck out of our net on the (penalty kill)."

Edmonton got on the board 4:12 into the second when Draisaitl took a deflected pass at the side of the net and slammed it past Demko on a power play.

The Oilers pulled within a goal with another power-play goal with 5:59 left in the second on a three-way passing play from Zach Hyman to Draisaitl and then to McDavid.

"It was just not a good start for our group. It was the first game and maybe there was a little bit of jitters," McDavid said. "It is not going to be perfect every night. You are not going to have the game you want every night and sometimes you get a win with your 'B' or 'C' game. It was certainly not our 'A' game to start, but we found a way to get

our legs going and get ourselves back in it."

Edmonton pulled even with 41 seconds left in the period on a 2-on-1 short-handed break as Draisaitl fed it across to Nurse, who beat Demko with a one-timer.

The Oilers took the lead with 4:59 left in the third period with McDavid orchestrating a give-and-go with Hyman before depositing his own rebound past Demko. It was McDavid's 700th career point, making him the sixth-fastest player to hit the mark in 488 games.

McDavid completed the hat trick with 25 seconds left when Evander Kane dropped it back to him for an empty-net power-play goal.

Bruins 5, Capitals 2: David Pastrnak had a goal and three assists, captain Patrice Bergeron scored and visiting Boston beat Washington in the season opener for both teams.

Pastrnak assisted on Bergeron's goal on a power play with the initial shot that turned into a juicy rebound and set up Taylor Hall with a perfect pass into the

middle of the ice to put Boston up 3-0. Washington scored twice before Pastrnak took the shot that turned into David Krejci's sealing goal with 3:43 left.

Hurricanes 4, Blue Jackets 1: Martin Necas had a goal and two assists and host Carolina beat Columbus in their opener.

Columbus turned to Daniil Tarasov as the surprise opening-night starter because top netminder Elvis Merzlikins was ill.

Ducks 5, Kraken 4 (OT): Troy Terry scored his second goal 55 seconds into overtime and host Anaheim overcame a two-goal deficit to beat Seattle in the opener.

John Gibson made 44 saves and assisted on Terry's winner.

Canadiens 4, Maple Leafs 3: Josh Anderson scored with 19 seconds left to lift host Montreal past Toronto in the opener for both teams.

Cole Caufield scored twice and Sean Monahan had his first goal for the Canadiens after coming over in an offseason deal with Calgary.