

US, 2 allies to up defense cooperation

BY DAVID CHOI
AND HANA KUSUMOTO
Stars and Stripes

TOKYO — Diplomats from the United States, South Korea and Japan agreed Wednesday to strengthen their countries' shared defensive measures in light of North Korea's "extremely frequent" missile tests.

Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman, First Vice Foreign Minister Cho Hyun-dong of South Korea and Vice Foreign Minister Takeo Mori of Japan met in Tokyo for the second time this week to discuss cooperation between the three countries, according to a news release from Japan's Foreign Affairs Ministry on Wednesday.

The three diplomats "appreciated the recent progress" in cooperation on security matters and agreed to continue working together in dealing with Pyongyang's provocations, the release said.

North Korea has fired more than 40 missiles in 26 rounds of tests so far this year. The communist regime last launched a

ballistic missile and fired over 100 artillery rounds on Oct. 14.

Japan has expressed concern over the flurry of tests, particularly after a North Korean intermediate-range ballistic missile soared over its northern region on Oct. 3. That launch prompted the country to warn citizens to take shelter and halted the public during rush hour.

On Tuesday, South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol said North Korea has completed preparations for its seventh nuclear weapons test, which U.S. and South Korean officials have warned of for months.

Sherman, Cho and Mori also "strongly condemned" Russia's invasion of Ukraine and shared concerns that "unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force should not be tolerated" in the East and South China Seas, an apparent reference to China's interest in absorbing Taiwan.

The diplomats also met Tuesday to discuss "serious concerns" about continued North Korean threats, according to a news release from South Korea's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Sherman, the release said,

"expressed sympathy and support, and reaffirmed the U.S.'s strong commitment" to Seoul.

Despite some lingering territorial and historical disputes, Yoon and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida have vowed to work together to mend their differences.

"We shared the understanding that if relations between South Korea and Japan return to the good times of the past at an early date and exchanges between businesses and between our people become smooth, it will be of great help to the two countries' economies," Yoon told reporters on Oct. 7, according to South Korea's Yonhap News.

On Sept. 30, naval forces from South Korea and Japan joined the aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan for anti-submarine warfare drills in the East Sea, also known as the Sea of Japan, for the first time in five years. South Korea's Ministry of National Defense characterized the exercise as "defensive" and said it was held to "cope with the North Korean nuclear and missile threat."

Putin monitors nuke forces' practice missile launches

Associated Press

MOSCOW — Russian President Vladimir Putin on Wednesday monitored drills of the country's strategic nuclear forces involving multiple practice launches of ballistic and cruise missiles in a show of force amid the heightened tensions with the West over the conflict in Ukraine.

Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu reported to Putin that the exercise was intended to simulate a "massive nuclear strike" by Russia in retaliation for a nuclear attack on Russia.

The maneuvers followed Putin's warning about his readiness to use "all means available" to fend off attacks on Russia's territory in a clear reference to the country's nuclear arsenals.

During Wednesday's drills, a Yars land-based intercontinental ballistic missile was test-fired from the northern Plesetsk

launch site. A Russian nuclear submarine in the Barents Sea launched a Sineva ICBM at the Kura firing range on the far-eastern Kamchatka Peninsula.

As part of the exercise, Tu-95 strategic bombers also launched cruise missiles at practice targets.

The Kremlin said in a statement that all tasks set for the exercise were fulfilled and all the missiles that were test-fired reached their designated targets.

Such maneuvers involving land, sea and air components of the Russian nuclear triad have taken place on an annual basis to train the country's nuclear forces and demonstrate their readiness. A previous such exercise was held just days before Putin sent troops into Ukraine.

The Biden administration said Tuesday that Russia gave notice it intended to stage routine drills of its nuclear capabilities. The

Pentagon and U.S. State Department said Russia had complied with the terms of the last U.S.-Russia arms control agreement in notifying Washington of the upcoming tests.

The Russian nuclear exercise comes amid Moscow's warnings of a purported Ukrainian plot to detonate a radioactive device commonly known as a "dirty bomb" in a false flag attack to blame Russia. The Ukrainian government has said it suspects Russia is planning its own false flag operation.

Authorities in Poland, Ukraine's western neighbor, said they were closely watching Russia's movements to prepare for the potential use of nuclear or chemical weapons.

Deputy Defense Minister Marcin Ociepa charged that the Kremlin "may reach for nuclear or chemical weapons" in the face of military setbacks in Ukraine.

Navy's Goshawk jet fleet remains grounded

By **WYATT OLSON**
Stars and Stripes

The Navy continues to investigate the root cause of an engine problem discovered in a T-45C Goshawk jet earlier this month that led to the grounding of the fleet of 193 trainer aircraft.

The Navy commenced a "safety pause" for the fleet three days after one of the jets experienced engine blade failure on Oct. 11, the service said

in an Oct. 18 news release.

The Navy did not disclose where the jet was stationed.

"Out of an abundance of caution and concern for the safety of our aviators, [Chief of Naval Air Training] made the decision to halt all T-45C Goshawk operations following the discovery of an engine blade failure," CNATRA Rear Adm. Richard Brophy said in the release. "We are working with our partners toward a swift

resolution. Safety is at the core of our operations, and we must not expose our pilots or aircraft to unnecessary risk."

Navy officials are working with Rolls-Royce, the maker of the turbofan engine, to identify the root cause of the blade failure, the release said.

Citing unnamed officials, Navy Times reported Tuesday that the jet engine had undergone "a low-pressure compressor blade failure" before take-

off on Oct. 11.

In an earlier incident on Aug. 16, a Goshawk crashed on approach to Naval Air Station in Kingsville, Texas. The instructor pilot ejected safely.

The unnamed officials told Navy Times that no prior Goshawk mishap had been attributed to the engine blade failure now being analyzed, although the causes of the August crash remain under investigation.

Home-based child care options return to Yokota

By **KELLY AGEE**
Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan—At-home child care has returned to this airlift hub in western Tokyo where military and civilian working families have long called for more day care services.

One woman certified as a Family Child Care provider said she opened her door Friday with space for three children on a varying schedule. Another provider may be approved by the end of the year with room for six kids, according to the 374th Force Support Squadron, which is responsible for the program at Yokota.

Family Child Care is provided by individuals vetted by the force support squadron. The homes may take in children ages 2 weeks to 12 years old in varying circumstances, according to the squadron website.

"It brings me joy to see this program come to life again," Maj. Jordan Hayes, the squadron commander, recently told Stars and Stripes. "And I know that I'm going to be able to take better care of my own airmen and their families because I now have a resource that I didn't have yesterday."

The program has been absent

at Yokota for nearly a year due to a lack of providers, according to Tenley Thayer, the squadron's child care coordinator. And space at the Child Development Center is at a premium, with six children on the waiting list, according to information she provided in an email Wednesday.

Yokota residents complained at a town hall in 2020 of a need for more on-base child care and of insufficient space at the CDC, which had a six-month waiting list at the time, according to one parent. The COVID-19 pandemic further complicated the shortage.

On Friday, Air Force spouse MaKenzie Tedder opened her door as a Family Child Care provider, she told Stars and Stripes by Facebook Messenger on Tuesday. She has availability for two preschool-aged children on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Tuesdays and Thursdays are slated for drop-in hourly care for two to three children ages 2 and older, and she has availability on weekends for two to three children of all ages.

Tedder, 27, has been a licensed child care provider since September 2020 when she and her husband were stationed at Ramstein Air Base, Germany.

Chaotic draft criticized by families within Russia

Associated Press

The mobilized reservists that Russian President Vladimir Putin visited last week at a firing range southeast of Moscow looked picture-perfect.

Kremlin video of the young men headed for the war in Ukraine showed them in mint-condition uniforms, equipped with all the gear needed for combat: helmets, bulletproof vests and sleeping bags. When Putin asked if they had any problems, they shook their heads.

That stands in stark contrast to the complaints circulating widely on Russian news outlets and social media of equipment shortages, poor living conditions and scant training for the new recruits.

Since Putin announced the mobilization Sept. 21, independent media, human rights activists and those called up have painted a bleak picture of a haphazard, chaotic and ethnically biased effort to round up as many men as possible and push them quickly to the front lines, regardless of skill, training and equipment.

Videos on Russian social networks showed conscripted men complaining of cramped, filthy

accommodations, toilets overflowing with trash and a lack of food and medicine. Some showed men displaying rusty weapons.

"We didn't seek you out; you called us. Here, look at this! How long can this go on?" an exasperated voice says in a video.

Putin's decree on the partial mobilization didn't outline the criteria for draftees or say how many would be called up.

Conscription protests have been harshly put down, and tens of thousands of men fled Russia to neighboring countries to avoid being pressed into service.

The hasty call-up will hardly achieve anything other than "slowing down the advances" of Ukrainian troops in the 8-month-old war, military analyst Pavel Luzin said in an interview.

Luzin, a visiting scholar at The Fletcher School at Tufts University, said Russia isn't able to train hundreds of thousands of men. "The army was not ready for mobilization. It never prepared for it," he said.

Putin has promised to finish the mobilization drive by November, when the regular fall draft is scheduled. As of mid-October, 222,000 reservists have been recruited, Putin said.

3 convicted of aiding plot to kidnap Whitmer

Associated Press

Three men accused of supporting a plot to kidnap Michigan's governor were convicted of all charges Wednesday, a triumph for state prosecutors after months of mixed results in the main case in federal court.

Joe Morrison, his father-in-law Pete Musico, and Paul Bellar were found guilty of providing "material support" for a terrorist act as members of a paramilitary group, the Wolverine Watchmen.

They held gun drills in rural Jackson County with a leader of the scheme, Adam Fox, who was disgusted with Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and other officials in 2020 and said he wanted to kidnap her.

Jurors read and heard violent, anti-government screeds as well

as support for the "boogaloo," a civil war that might be triggered by a shocking abduction. Prosecutors said COVID-19 restrictions ordered by Whitmer turned out to be fruit to recruit more people to the Watchmen.

"The facts drip out slowly," state Assistant Attorney General Bill Rollstin told jurors in Jackson, Mich., "and you begin to see — wow — there were things that happened that people knew about. ... When you see how close Adam Fox got to the governor, you can see how a very bad event was thwarted."

Morrison, 28, Musico, 44, and Bellar, 24, were also convicted of a gun crime and membership in a gang. Prosecutors said the Wolverine Watchmen was a criminal enterprise.

Morrison, who recently tested

positive for COVID-19, and Musico watched the verdict by video away from the courtroom. Judge Thomas Wilson ordered all three to jail while they await sentencing scheduled for Dec. 15.

Defense attorneys argued that the three men had broken ties with Fox by late summer 2020 when the Whitmer plot came into focus. Unlike Fox and others, they didn't travel to northern Michigan to scout the governor's vacation home or participate in a key weekend training session inside a "shoot house."

"In this country, you are allowed to talk the talk but you only get convicted if you walk the walk," Musico's attorney, Kareem Johnson, said in his closing remarks.

Defense lawyers couldn't ar-

gue entrapment. But they attacked the tactics of Dan Chapel, an Army veteran and undercover informant. He took instructions from FBI agents, secretly recorded conversations and produced a deep cache of messages exchanged with the men.

Whitmer, a Democrat running for reelection on Nov. 8, was never physically harmed. Undercover agents and informants were inside Fox's group for months. The scheme was broken up with 14 arrests in October 2020.

Fox and Barry Croft Jr. were convicted of a kidnapping conspiracy in federal court in August. Daniel Harris and Brandon Caserta were acquitted last spring. Ty Garbin and Kaleb Franks pleaded guilty.

Kremlin: Griner swap talks must be kept confidential

Associated Press

MOSCOW — The Kremlin on Wednesday kept the door open for talks on a possible swap involving jailed U.S. basketball star Brittney Griner, but reiterated that any such discussions must be kept strictly confidential.

A Russian court on Tuesday rejected Griner's appeal against her nine-year prison sentence for drug possession. The eight-time all-star center with the WNBA's Phoenix Mercury and a two-time Olympic gold medalist was convicted Aug. 4 after police said they found vape canisters containing cannabis oil in her luggage at Moscow's Sheremetyevo Airport.

Asked if Griner could be freed as part of a prisoners swap with Washington, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said in a conference call with reporters that "we always say that any contacts about possible exchanges can only be conducted in silence under a tight lid on any information."

Griner's arrest in February

came at a time of heightened tensions between Moscow and Washington, just days before Russia sent troops into Ukraine. At the time, Griner was returning to play for a Russian team during the WNBA's offseason.

President Joe Biden told reporters that his administration is in "constant contact" with Russian authorities on Griner and other Americans who are detained there. While there has not been progress on bringing her back to the United States, Biden said, "We're not stopping."

At her trial, Griner admitted to having the canisters in her luggage but testified she packed them inadvertently in her haste to make her flight and had no criminal intent. Her defense team presented written statements saying she had been prescribed cannabis to treat chronic pain.

Before her conviction, the U.S. State Department declared Griner to be "wrongfully detained" — a charge that Russia has rejected.

Government awarding \$1B to schools for electric buses

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Nearly 400 school districts spanning all 50 states and Washington, D.C., along with several tribes and U.S. territories, are receiving roughly \$1 billion in grants to purchase about 2,500 "clean" school buses under a new federal program.

The Biden administration is making the grants available as part of a wider effort to accelerate the transition to zero-emission vehicles and reduce air pollution near schools and communities.

Vice President Kamala Harris and Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Michael Regan were set to announce the grant awards Wednesday in Seattle. The new, mostly electric school buses will reduce greenhouse gas emissions, save money and better protect children's health, the White House said.

As many as 25 million children ride familiar yellow school buses

each school day and will have a "healthier future" with a cleaner fleet, Regan said. "This is just the beginning of our work to ... reduce climate pollution and ensure the clean, breathable air that all our children deserve," he said.

Only about 1% of the nation's 480,000 school buses were electric as of last year, but the push to abandon traditional diesel buses has gained momentum in recent years. Money for the new purchases is available under the federal Clean School Bus Program, which includes \$5 billion from the bipartisan infrastructure law President Joe Biden signed last year.

The EPA initially made \$500 million available for clean buses in May but increased that to \$965 million last month, responding to what officials called overwhelming demand for electric buses across the country. An additional \$1 billion is set to be awarded in the budget year that began Oct. 1.

At least 15 dead in Iran Shiite holy site attack

Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Iranian state-run media reported Wednesday that gunmen opened fire at a major Shiite holy site in the southern city of Shiraz, killing at least 15 people.

The official website of the judiciary says two gunmen were arrested and a third is on the run.

The state-run IRNA news agency reported the casualty toll.

Sunni extremists have targeted holy sites sacred to the country's Shiite majority in the past. The attack comes as Iran has been convulsed by anti-government demonstrations for over a month.

Before the shooting, thousands of protesters poured into the streets of a northwestern Iranian city on Wednesday to mark the watershed 40 days since the death in custody of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini, whose tragedy sparked

Iran's biggest antigovernment movement in over a decade.

In a separate development, most of the remaining portion of a 10-story tower that collapsed earlier this year in the southwestern city of Abadan, killing at least 41 people, fell on Wednesday, state-run media reported. The state-run IRNA news agency reported that a woman in a car parked near the site was killed. Other parts of the building had col-

lapsed last month.

The deadly collapse of the Metropol Building on May 23 became a lightning rod for protests in Abadan, some 410 miles southwest of the capital, Tehran. The disaster shined a spotlight on shoddy construction practices, government corruption and negligence in Iran.

Videos spread online of the remaining tower crashing into the street as massive clouds of dust billowed into the sky.

UK leader Sunak faces Parliament opposition

Associated Press

LONDON — British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak held the first meeting of his new Cabinet before facing the opposition in Parliament on Wednesday for the first time as leader.

Sunak took office on Tuesday and appointed a government mixing allies with experienced ministers from the governments of his two immediate predecessors, Boris Johnson and Liz Truss, as he tries to tackle Britain's multiple economic problems.

Sunak's office said the lineup "reflects a unified party" and aims to ensure "that at this uncertain time, there is continuity at the heart of government."

But during the regular House of Commons session known as Prime Minister's Questions, opposition politicians are likely to focus on the baggage the new ministers carry from the governments of Johnson — who quit in July after a slew of ethics scandals — and Truss, whose government lasted just seven weeks.

Sunak is seen by Conservatives as a safe pair of hands they hope can stabilize an economy sliding toward recession — and stem the party's plunging popularity.

Sunak brought in people from different wings of the Conservative Party for his Cabinet. He removed about a dozen members of Truss' government but kept several senior figures in place, including Foreign Secretary James Cleverly and Defense Secretary Ben Wallace.

He is facing backlash for reappointing Home Secretary Suella Braverman, who resigned last week after breaching ethics rules by sending a sensitive government email from a private account. She used her resignation letter to criticize Truss, hastening the then-prime minister's demise.

A leading light of the Conservatives' right wing who infuriates liberals, Braverman is tasked with fulfilling a controversial, stalled plan to send some asylum-seekers arriving in Britain on a one-way trip to Rwanda.

Opponents expressed astonishment that Braverman could be back in her job less than a week after her resignation and before an investigation of her breach of the ethics rules.

Cleverly defended the choice. "People make mistakes in their work," he told the BBC. "No one goes to work with the intention of making a mistake."

Chinese city rolling out inhalable COVID vaccine

Associated Press

BEIJING — The Chinese city of Shanghai started administering an inhalable COVID-19 vaccine on Wednesday in what appears to be a world first.

The vaccine, a mist that is sucked in through the mouth, is being offered for free as a booster dose for previously vaccinated people, according to an announcement on an official city social media account.

Scientists hope that such "needle-free" vaccines will make vaccination more accessible in countries with fragile health systems because they are easier to administer. They may also persuade people who don't like getting a shot in the arm to get inoculated.

China wants more people to get booster shots before it relaxes strict pandemic restrictions that are holding back the economy and are increasingly out of sync with the rest of the world. As of mid-October, 90% of Chinese were fully vaccinated and 57% had received a booster shot.

A video posted by an online Chinese state media outlet showed people at a community health center sticking the short nozzle of a translucent white cup into their mouths. The accompanying text said that after slowly

inhaling, people hold their breath for five seconds, with the entire procedure completed in 20 seconds.

"It was like drinking a cup of milk tea," one Shanghai resident said in the video. "When I breathed it in, it tasted a bit sweet."

A vaccine taken in the mouth could also fend off the virus before it reaches the rest of the respiratory system, though that would depend in part on the size of the droplets, one expert said.

Larger droplets would train defenses in parts of the mouth and throat, while smaller ones would travel further into the body, said Dr. Vineeta Bal, an immunologist in India.

Chinese regulators approved the vaccine for use as a booster in September. It was developed by Chinese biopharmaceutical company CanSino Biologics Inc. as an aerosol version of the company's one-shot adenovirus vaccine, which uses a relatively harmless cold virus.

China has relied on domestically developed vaccines, primarily two inactivated vaccines that have proven effective in preventing death and serious disease but less so than the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines at stopping the spread of the disease.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Chuck Yeager exhibit now open at airport

WV CHARLESTON — A new exhibit on Chuck Yeager coinciding with the 75th anniversary of his breaking the sound barrier has opened at West Virginia International Yeager Airport.

Officials from the airport participated in the opening, along with staff from Marshall University, where Yeager donated artifacts in 1986.

The exhibit is located in the airport's observation area.

Lori Thompson, Marshall's head of special collections, said that among the materials in the display are a framed copy of "Bell XS-1 Makes Supersonic Flight," from Aviation Week, Dec. 22, 1947; a plaque presented for years of dedicated service from the U.S. Air Force; a sculpture on a wooden base commemorating the 50th anniversary of breaking the sound barrier in 1997; and a plaque presented by the Charleston Gazette-Mail for "West Virginian of the Year."

USPS gives stamp to late Justice Ginsburg

DC WASHINGTON — The U.S. Postal Service is honoring the late Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg as "an icon of American culture" with a stamp in the new year.

The design is a painted portrait based on a photo of Ginsburg in a black robe with an intricate white collar, which became her trademark.

Ginsburg died in 2020 at the age of 87.

The newly unveiled first-class "forever" stamp of the liberal

icon will be available for purchase in 2023, although officials did not mention a specific date.

A first-class stamp currently costs 60 cents, a price that will rise to 63 cents on Jan. 22, 2023.

State, federal agents probe death of skydiver

NJ PITTSBURGH — State and federal authorities are investigating the death of a Michigan man in a skydiving accident in New Jersey.

State police said they responded to a call for medical assistance at the Alexandria Field airport in Alexandria Township in Hunterdon County.

Police said first responders found the skydiver lying in a field near the airport runway.

Brandon M. Jackson, 37, of Troy, Mich., was pronounced dead at the scene, police said.

Police didn't immediately identify the company involved or release other details.

Ex-lawmaker arrested on DUI charge in crash

TN NASHVILLE — A former Tennessee lawmaker who was expelled from his seat in 2016 is facing charges for a downtown Nashville car crash of driving under the influence, possessing drug paraphernalia and resisting arrest.

According to an arrest affidavit, former Republican Rep. Jeremy Durham was in the crash, and the other driver claimed an injury.

The affidavit said Durham had slurred speech, dilated pupils, was unsteady on his feet, attempted to walk away from the officer, then tried to pull away

from the officer while being handcuffed. When Durham was in the patrol vehicle, he smelled like alcohol, had bloodshot, watery eyes, and his speech was slow and mumbled, the affidavit states.

The Republican-led General Assembly expelled Durham, who represented Williamson County, in 2016. The ouster came after an attorney general's report detailed allegations that Durham engaged in inappropriate sexual contact with at least 22 women.

Wildlife agents kill black bear that hurt woman

WA LEAVENWORTH — Wildlife authorities in Washington state killed a black bear after it charged and injured a woman near a downtown park in the Bavarian-styled town of Leavenworth.

The woman had let out her dog when an adult female bear charged her, the Department of Fish and Wildlife said. She suffered non-life-threatening injuries and was being treated at a hospital.

Wildlife officers using a Karelian bear dog found and killed a sow later that morning. They captured two cubs, about 9 months old, and brought them to a wildlife rehabilitation facility.

Officials: Deputy stabs patient in gun struggle

OR HILLSBORO — A Washington County Sheriff's deputy stabbed a male patient multiple times after he tried to take the officer's firearm, officials said.

The deputy was at the Kaiser Permanente Westside Medical Center's Emergency Depart-

ment with the patient, who was being admitted on a civil hold, when the patient charged the deputy, the sheriff's office said in a press release.

"The adult male ignored the deputy's commands to stop and continued to attack the deputy and try to gain possession of the deputy's firearm," the sheriff's office said. "During the struggle, the adult male was stabbed multiple times by the deputy."

The patient was taken to another area of the hospital for treatment. A hospital worker who helped the deputy sustained minor injuries.

Whale's decline slows, but population falls

ME PORTLAND — The decline of an endangered species of whale slowed last year, as it lost about 2% of its population, but scientists warned the animal still faces existential threats and is losing breeding females too fast.

The North Atlantic right whale's population was more than 480 in 2010 and fell by more than 25% over the following decade. The North Atlantic Right Whale Consortium, a group of scientists, government officials and industry members, said the population fell to an estimated 340 last year.

The whales are vulnerable to ship collisions and entanglement in commercial fishing gear, and they have suffered from poor reproduction and high mortality in recent years.

They have been listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act for more than 50 years but have been slow to recover.

— From wire reports

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Commanders have declined under Snyder

Associated Press

Super Bowl-winning defensive end Fred Stokes remembers what he heard from other players in 1989 when he left the Los Angeles Rams as a free agent to join the NFL team based in the nation's capital.

"When I got here," Stokes said, "the guys all told me, 'We're all about winning.' Washington and winning went together."

This was back when D.C.'s football franchise was in the midst of making the postseason eight times in 11 years, a run of success that featured four Super Bowl appearances and three championships. Back when sellouts and bouncing stands at old home RFK Stadium were a given. When offensive innovator Joe Gibbs called the shots as a head coach destined for induction at the Pro Football Hall of Fame. And, of most significance considering the current climate, when Jack Kent Cooke was the owner of a club that was sold by his estate to Daniel Snyder a decade later, a transaction that led to a whole lot of losing — only four

teams have a lower winning percentage since 1999; only two have fewer playoff wins — and whirl of misconduct that has not abated.

So what does Stokes see nowadays when he looks at what has become of what are now known as the Commanders, following the discarding of an offensive name amid a national reckoning about racism in 2020 — although Snyder's wife, Tanya, and the team president, Jason Wright, seemed to forget about that change on Sunday, when both gave shoutouts to the old moniker at a "homecoming" rally outside the stadium featuring dozens of former players?

"A house without a proper foundation," Stokes said. "You can't have crown molding, you can't have nice countertops, you can't have hardwood floors, without a foundation. When I came here, there was a foundation. That's missing."

Wearing on his right hand the gold ring earned via a Super Bowl victory under Gibbs in January 1992, following a season in which Stokes was

second on the team with 6½ sacks, he continued: "What's that expression? 'It takes a village to raise a child.' Well, it takes an organization to win a Super Bowl, not just coaches and players."

Under Snyder, the approach has varied over the years.

Resurrecting the careers of past winners such as Gibbs and Mike Shanahan, who never came close to equaling their earlier coaching résumés. Hiring someone few others considered head coaching material in Jim Zorn, then adding an out-of-football play caller whose most recent job had been as a bingo caller (Sherman Lewis). Bringing aboard right-hand men who never panned out, such as Vinny Cerato and Bruce Allen. Free agency has been all over the place, from wild overspending to against-the-rules accounting to the underspending of last offseason. Drafting often has been a disaster.

All of that is to say nothing of the general dysfunction and, worse, the allegations of sexual harassment and financial im-

propriety that led to multiple ongoing investigations of Snyder — by the league, by Congress, by D.C.'s attorney general — and prompted Indianapolis Colts owner Jim Irsay to say a week ago that there is "merit to remove" Snyder. He already was fined \$10 million and told to cede day-to-day operations of the club to Tanya for several months by the NFL last year after a previous inquiry into widespread sexual harassment and mistreatment of women by the team.

Attendance is at the bottom of the league, but some of the spectators on hand Sunday let their feelings be known — during a victory, no less, by a score of 23-21 against four-time NFL MVP Aaron Rodgers and the Green Bay Packers that improved last-place Washington's record to 3-4 this season — by booing and then chanting "Sell the team!" after Tanya Snyder was part of a video about breast cancer awareness that played on the videoboard.

Hardly the first time that cry has been heard at the dilapidated arena in Landover, Md.

Veteran pass rushers give Ravens defense big boost

Associated Press

BALTIMORE — With Calais Campbell, Justin Houston and now Jason Pierre-Paul, Baltimore's pass rush certainly has a lot of experience.

It's pretty effective too.

The Ravens sacked Cleveland's Jacoby Brissett five times in a 23-20 victory Sunday. Two of those sacks were from the 33-year-old Houston, boosting his career total to 106. The 36-year-old Campbell also had one and forced a key fumble on the play.

"If you can put pressure on the quarterback and make the quarterback uncomfortable, that creates a lot of turnovers," Houston said. "It helps the game. It changes the game. So, any time you can get turnovers and change the momentum of the game, that's big."

After signing Pierre-Paul last month, the Ravens are one of two teams to have three

defenders on their active roster with at least 90 career sacks. The other was the 1994 Green Bay Packers with Reggie White, Steve McMichael and Sean Jones.

Baltimore ranks sixth in the league with 20 sacks on the season. The Ravens are also tied for first with 14 takeaways. All of that has helped Baltimore's defense recover after allowing 28 fourth-quarter points in a loss to Miami in Week 2.

This is the Ravens' first season under new defensive coordinator Mike Macdonald, and after a rough start — particularly in the secondary — the defense seems to be moving in the right direction. Houston already has four sacks, just a half-sack shy of the linebacker's total from all of last season. And he's done it despite missing three straight games before Sunday with a groin injury.

"Justin Houston came up big for us today," Campbell said after the win over Cle-

veland. "I thought he was the best player on the field when he was out there."

Campbell has three sacks, already doubling his total from last season. The 33-year-old Pierre-Paul has a sack as well since joining the team. When Campbell forced Brissett to fumble in the third quarter Sunday, the Ravens recovered at the Cleveland 25 and scored a touchdown soon thereafter.

"I think we're just building and growing in the right direction. I always knew what we had in the locker room. It was just a matter of time," Houston said.

"We're still growing, we're still learning how each other works. JPP is new. We're figuring out how he likes to rush. It's more than just a one-man show up front. Everybody has got to be on the same page, and the communication has to be big when you're rushing up front."

Judge, others face uncertain futures in NY

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Aaron Judge's future is uncertain. It remains to be seen whether Aaron Boone's is, too.

Judge's career in pinstripes might have ended when he made the final out in Sunday night's 6-5 loss to the Houston Astros, who completed a four-game AL Championship Series sweep.

"Getting a chance to wear the pinstripes and play right field at Yankee Stadium, it's an incredible honor that I definitely didn't take for granted at any point," Judge said in the quiet clubhouse. "I always check myself pregame and I say a little prayer and I kind of look around the stadium and I kind of pinch myself.

"Very few individuals get a chance to run on that field and do that and play in front of the fans that support us throughout my whole six years here," he added. "It was a special time, and I just kick myself for not bringing home that championship for them."

In the hours before opening day, Judge turned down a seven-year contract that would have paid \$213.5 million from 2023-29, choosing instead to remain eligible for free agency after the World Series.

He set an American League record with

62 homers, tied for the major league lead with 131 RBIs and finished second in the AL with a .311 batting average. But he hit just .139 with three RBIs and 15 strikeouts in the postseason, going 1-for-16 (.063) with no RBIs against the Astros. He made the final out on a comebacker.

"It's baseball, man. I mean, it happens all the time where the greatest of greats go through a struggle," Boone said. "It's a game of failure. You're going to have some ups and downs."

Able to negotiate with all teams starting on the sixth day after the World Series, Judge is due a big reward for betting on himself. He could command a \$300 million-plus contract.

"That's all going to run through my agent," he said. "I haven't even thought about the next step yet. But like I said, we got time to figure it out."

Boone agreed last October to a three-year deal with a team option for 2025. In his fifth season as manager, New York sprinted to a 61-23 record in early July, sparking comparison with the 1998 championship Yankees. But hampered by injuries, the Yankees went 38-40 the rest of the way.

Without a World Series title since 2009,

New York heads into an offseason in which pitcher Jameson Taillon, outfielder Andrew Benintendi and utilitymen Matt Carpenter and Marwin Gonzalez are eligible for free agency along with relievers Chad Green, Miguel Castro, Zack Britton and Aroldis Chapman.

First baseman Anthony Rizzo can opt out and give up a \$16 million salary for next season.

Brian Cashman, the general manager since 1998, is finishing a five-year contract. He has been attempting to retool the roster in recent years to make the batting order less right-handed and improve the defense. The process began when Gleyber Torres was moved to second base in September 2021 and catcher Gary Sánchez was traded last winter, and kept up with the August acquisition of center fielder Harrison Bader.

New York was missing DJ LeMahieu, who may need toe surgery, and Andrew Benintendi, recovering from wrist surgery.

"It's an awful day, just an awful ending. It stings. It hurts," Boone said. "Obviously we had some key contributors missing that I think would have been difference-makers for us potentially."

Padres would like to have Soto 'for many years to come'

Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — The sudden end of a season that went unexpectedly deep left the San Diego Padres with questions to answer and holes to fill, as well as a hunger to play further into October next year.

They will also begin pondering a long-term deal for 24-year-old superstar Juan Soto, their marquee trade-deadline acquisition who was heating up just as the Padres were eliminated in the NL Championship Series by Bryce Harper and the Philadelphia Phillies on Sunday, three wins shy of the World Series.

"All of us were hoping we'd be playing Game 7 here tonight," general manager A.J. Preller said Tuesday during a wrap-up news conference at Petco Park.

Star shortstop Fernando Tatis Jr. is eligible to return from an 80-game PED suspension on April 20 and Soto is under team control for two more years. So the Padres can look forward to having Tatis, Soto and Manny Machado — who had an MVP-caliber season — in the heart of the order.

Preller said the Padres don't view Soto and All-Star closer Josh Hader, obtained a day before the trade deadline, as rental pieces.

"They're guys that, you know, in Juan's case should be here for many years to come," Preller said.

Soto turned down a \$440 million, 15-year deal with Washington that precipitated his trade.

Padres owner Peter Seidler doled out a \$300 million, 10-year contract to Machado in 2019 and a \$340 million, 14-year deal to Tatis in 2021.

"I think we'll have that conversation," Preller said. "All this is pretty fresh. From Juan's standpoint, he's getting to know the city and getting to know the organization. When we made the deal, we made it knowing that we got him for three pennant races. He's an incredibly talented player, he's an impact player, and we'll have those conversations here. This offseason is kind of taking the temperature, seeing where his head is at going forward."

The Padres reinvigorated their fan base by eliminating the 101-win New York Mets in the wild-card round and then dispatching the 111-win Dodgers in four Division Series games, with the clincher sparking one of the wildest nights in San Diego sports history.

But they managed only one win against the Phillies in their first NLCS appearance since 1998.

"This was a taste of what's to come," Preller said.

Tatis was close to returning from left wrist surgery when he was suspended by MLB for 80 games on Aug. 12 after testing positive for a performance-enhancing drug.

Asked where Tatis would have the most impact, manager Bob Melvin said: "Everywhere. He's that talented. So, we have to see what the composition of the roster looks like. I know when he was potentially coming back, before the last issue, he said, 'I'll do whatever I need to do for the team.' He worked out in the outfield; he worked out at shortstop. We had a plan of using him in multiple spots and he was all in."

Kessel sets Ironman mark in Vegas win

Associated Press

SAN JOSE, Calif. — Phil Kessel celebrated his NHL Ironman record by scoring his 400th career goal and the Vegas Golden Knights beat the San Jose Sharks 4-2 on Tuesday night.

“I was happy to get it,” Kessel said. “It was a special night. I’m glad to get the win.”

Kessel broke the record set by Keith Yandle last season when he got the start in his 990th consecutive game since taking the ice for Toronto on Nov. 3, 2009.

He wasn’t done there, getting the first goal of the game to add to his milestone night. He took a pass in transition from Brett Howden and beat James Reimer up high to become the 12th American-born player to score 400 goals.

“It was just pure happiness from everyone,” teammate William Karlsson said. “Everyone was just cheering and howling. It was really good to see it go in.”

The Golden Knights made sure it was a celebratory night with goals from Shea Theodore,

William Karlsson and Mark Stone in the third period to get the win.

Adin Hill made 29 saves in his first game against San Jose since being traded to Vegas this summer.

The Sharks got goals from Nico Sturm and Matt Nieto in the second period but still lost their eighth straight home game to the Golden Knights. Reimer made 27 saves for San Jose.

Avalanche 3, Rangers 2 (SO): Evan Rodrigues scored the deciding goal in the shootout and Alexandar Georgiev made 44 saves against his former team to lead visiting Colorado.

Rodrigues beat Rangers goalie Igor Shesterkin in the fourth round of the tiebreaker before Georgiev denied Alexis Lafreniere’s attempt to seal the victory. Mikko Rantanen also scored in the shootout for Colorado and Artemi Panarin tallied for the Rangers.

Blackhawks 4, Panthers 2: Patrick Kane had a goal and an assist, and host Chicago won its fourth straight.

Florida, which won its first two games, is 2-2-1 since.

Kings 4, Lightning 2: Gabe Vilardi had a goal and an assist, Phillip Danault scored for the second straight game and host Los Angeles snapped a 10-game losing streak to Tampa Bay.

Blake Lizotte and Adrian Kempe both had a goal, and Jonathan Quick made 24 saves for the Kings.

Wild 3, Canadiens 1: Joel Eriksson Ek had two goals and Brandon Duhaime scored the tiebreaker in the second period and added an assist, leading visiting Minnesota past Montreal.

Eriksson Ek scored in the first period and added an empty-netter with 30 seconds left in the third. Marc-Andre Fleury finished with 26 saves for the Wild.

Bruins 3, Stars 1: Taylor Hall scored the tiebreaking goal late in the second period, Linus Ullmark stopped 30 shots and host Boston improved to 6-1.

It was the third straight game-winning score for Hall.

Coyotes 6, Blue Jackets 3:

Shayne Gostisbehere scored twice as visiting Arizona beat Columbus.

The Blue Jackets were 0-for-5 on the power play to fall to 0-for-20 on the season.

Devils 6, Red Wings 2: Jesper Bratt had two goals and an assist to lead visiting New Jersey.

The Red Wings (3-1-2) were the last remaining team without a regulation loss.

Flames 4, Penguins 1: Nazem Kadri had two goals and an assist to extend his points streak to six games as host Calgary beat Pittsburgh.

Evgeni Malkin scored for Pittsburgh, which has lost two straight in regulation after starting the season 4-0-1.

Kraken 5, Sabres 1: Daniel Sprong had a goal and two assists as host Seattle beat Buffalo.

Kraken defenseman Jamie Oleksiak opened the scoring less than 2½ minutes in. Morgan Geekie, Jordan McCann and Matty Beniers also scored for Seattle. Martin Jones made 15 saves.

Booker, Suns push past Warriors; Thompson tossed

Associated Press

PHOENIX — Devin Booker scored 34 points, Deandre Ayton added 16 points and 14 rebounds and the Phoenix Suns beat the Golden State Warriors 134-105 on Tuesday night in a game that featured Klay Thompson’s first career ejection and seven technical fouls.

Both teams lost their cool at various times during the third quarter, with all the technicals called in less than six minutes. Thompson received two quick ones and was ejected after having words with Booker, who also received a technical because of the exchange.

At one point during the argument, Thompson held up four fingers to signify the four championships the Warriors have won

over the past decade.

“I love Klay Thompson, I have for a really long time,” Booker said. “But that doesn’t excuse us from being competitive and talking to each other. I’ve always admired his game, how he plays on both sides of the ball, and obviously the rings speak for themselves.”

“But I’m going to bring it every time.”

Golden State’s Draymond Green and coach Steve Kerr, along with Phoenix players Chris Paul and Ayton were also whistled for technicals for various outbursts in the third, with most of that ire directed at the officials.

Pelicans 113, Mavericks 111: Trey Murphy III scored 22 points and short-handed host

New Orleans overcame Luka Doncic’s latest prolific performance to beat Dallas.

The Pelicans were missing two of their top three scorers in Brandon Ingram (concussion protocol) and Zion Williamson (hip bruise).

But eight Pelicans reached double figures in scoring, including first-round draft pick Dyson Daniels, who scored his first career points in the second quarter and finished with 11 in 22 minutes.

Doncic scored 37 to go with 11 rebounds and seven assists, but his three-point attempt at the final horn bounced off the front rim.

Wizards 120, Pistons 99: Kyle Kuzma scored 25 points and host Washington overcame

Bradley Beal’s back issues to beat Detroit.

Beal was limited to 21:49 because of back tightness. Kristaps Porzingis scored 20 points, Will Barton contributed 16 and Beal was able to finish with 13.

Bojan Bogdanovic led the Pistons with 25 points and Cade Cunningham added 19.

Thunder 108, Clippers 94: Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 33 points and host Oklahoma City defeated the short-handed Los Angeles Clippers for its first win of the season.

The Clippers were without their two biggest stars. Kawhi Leonard sat out to rest his right knee and Paul George missed the game with an illness. Oklahoma City took advantage by holding the Clippers to 42% shooting.