

Groton Daily Independent

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Groton Community Calendar Monday, Feb. 20

Moved to Monday: Region 1A Girls Basketball at Milbank: Milbank vs. Webster at 6 p.m. followed by Groton Area vs Waubay-Summit.

Senior Menu: Swiss steak, mashed potatoes, carrots, frosted brownie, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Pancake on stick.

School Lunch: Tater tot hot dish, peas.

1 p.m.: Senior Citizens Meet at the Groton Community Center.

The Pantry, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Cancelled: Junior High Boys Basketball at Clark, 4 p.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.; Newsletter deadline.

St. John's Lutheran: Christian Literature Circle, 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday, Feb. 21

Senior Menu: Spaghetti with meat sauce, mixed vegetables, garlic toast, mandarin orange.

School Breakfast: Doughnuts.

School Lunch: Corn dogs, fries.

Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

The Pantry, 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Moved to Monday: Region 1A Girls Basketball

Groton Daily Independent
PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445
Paul's Cell/Text: 605-397-7460



“Any glimpse into the life of an animal quickens our own and makes it so much larger and better in every way.”

JOHN MUIR

United Methodist Church: Bible Study, 10 a.m.; Conde Ad Council.

St. John's Lutheran: Quilting, 9 a.m.

Wednesday, Feb. 22 - Ash Wednesday

Senior Menu: Ash Wednesday. Baked fish, Mac and cheese, 3 bean salad, honey fruit salad, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: hash brown pizza.

School Lunch: Beef sticks, baked beans.

Groton CM&A: Kids' Club, Youth Group and Adult Bible Study begins at 7 pm

United Methodist Church: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Book Study with Lindsey Tietz, 4 p.m.; Confirmation, 4 p.m.; Groton Ash Wednesday Service, 6:30 p.m.; UMYF attends Ash Wednesday Service, 6:30 p.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Soup supper, 6 p.m (WELCA ex. Board serves), Worship, 7 p.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Bible Study, 2:45 p.m.; Confirmation, 3:45 p.m.; Lent Service, 7 p.m.

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

The recycling trailer is located west of the city shop. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.

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Weekly Vikings Recap

By Jack & Duane Kolsrud

After spending over two weeks interviewing several coaches for their defensive coordinator position, the Minnesota Vikings finally found their guy in Brian Flores. Flores, who spent 11 seasons in New England coaching under Bill Belichick, already has three super bowls as a coach to his resume. Flores' greatest coaching moment probably came in his last season in New England in 2018. After being given the defensive play-calling duties for the Patriots in 2018, Flores' defense put on one of the most impressive defensive performances in Super Bowl history, giving up only three points to a Los Angeles Rams team that had been statistically a top-two offense over the prior two seasons.

After the 2018 season, Flores was hired as the head coach of the Miami Dolphins. To say Flores' tenure in Miami was rocky would be an understatement. At the beginning of his first season, the Dolphins' front office had completely gutted the roster with the clear intention for the team to bottom out and end up with the number one overall pick in the draft so they could pick a franchise quarterback. However, Flores appeared to not get that message as he coached the Dolphins to a 5-11 record, which ultimately resulted in the Dolphins earning the fifth overall pick in the next year's draft. That inability to follow the desires of the front office is likely what got Flores fired in Miami two years later, despite leading the Dolphins to back-to-back winning seasons in his second and third years in Miami.

Although Flores' tenure in Miami was not a success, the one takeaway from Flores' coaching style was his willingness to be aggressive. In Flores' final two seasons in Miami, the Dolphins were ranked second in the NFL with a 40% blitz rate. Compare that to the Vikings' defense this past season under their former defensive coordinator, Ed Donatell, which finished with a measly 18.9 blitz rate, and ranked 24th in the NFL.

If you watched the Vikings all last season, the biggest frustration about the team had to be the passive nature of the defense. Rarely did the defense dial up a blitz when it was evident that their four-pass rushers were unable to get to the quarterback. And, despite the lack of blitzing, the middle of the field was still consistently wide open because of the soft coverage by the Vikings' cornerbacks. Could these issues have been caused by the fact that the Vikings had an older-aged defense that seemed to have lost a step? Perhaps. But the issue was that it felt like Donatell was flat-out unwilling to make any adjustments to make his defense perform more aggressively.

Hopefully, all that will change now that the Vikings' defense is led by Brian Flores. Speaking of changes, the Vikings have already started to make changes to their defense. It was announced on Saturday that the Vikings decided to part ways with linebackers coach, Greg Manusky after he spent just one season in Minnesota. This will likely not be the only Vikings' defensive position coach that leaves the Vikings as Flores will likely want coaches who more align with his coaching philosophy. Moreover, the Vikings will likely make changes from a player perspective on their defense as well. Of their 11 defensive starters, the Vikings currently have five of them that are over the age of 30. It will be interesting to see if Florio elects to keep these veteran players to lessen the learning curve, or if he elects to go with a younger, faster defense to fit his aggressive mindset.

“Is All High Blood Pressure Hypertension?”

Many people find themselves being told, “your blood pressure is pretty high today!” You might be at the dentist’s office for a filling, in the emergency room getting stitches after an avocado mishap, or maybe you’re at your annual physical appointment. If you’ve never had high blood pressure you might be surprised at this news! Sometimes my own patients will call my office after such an event, “Doc, should I be on blood pressure medication?”



Based on Science, Built on Trust



Kelly Evans-Hullinger, M.D..

When we get these calls our typical answer is: maybe, but maybe not. Blood pressure is a dynamic measurement, affected by many things including adrenaline and other stress hormones. If you measure the blood pressure of healthy people who are in stressful circumstances, you will often find it to be high. This can certainly be true in healthcare settings – have you ever felt stressed or anxious when you are hurt in the ER or sitting in a dental chair? I will advise these patients to come into our office and check their blood pressure under less duress; oftentimes it will be normal and reassuring.

Sometimes, though, the stressful circumstance is our primary care office, the very place we try to screen for high blood pressure. Some patients have elevated blood pressure in their primary care provider’s office but not at home or elsewhere; this is often referred to as “white coat hypertension.” The only way to know for sure, though, is to check blood pressure at home or outside the clinic visit.

If a hypothetical adult patient, who is feeling well and has never before had hypertension, comes to their annual physical and has a blood pressure of 155/90, the first step is to repeat it after a period of 5-10 minutes of quiet rest. If it is still elevated we will arrange to check resting blood pressures at home or in a series of lower stakes visits to the clinic with a nurse.

The diagnosis of hypertension and decisions about treatment should be made if the average of those resting blood pressures are above the threshold for recommended treatment. Of course, if a patient truly does have hypertension we want to initiate lifestyle interventions and possibly medication to reduce the long-term risk of poor health outcomes. But when it comes to high blood pressure, it is rarely an emergency, and often collecting more data is better.

Kelly Evans-Hullinger, M.D. is part of The Prairie Doc® team of physicians and currently practices internal medicine in Brookings, South Dakota. Follow The Prairie Doc® at www.prairiedoc.org and on Facebook featuring On Call with the Prairie Doc® a medical Q&A show providing health information based on science, built on trust, broadcast on SDPB and streaming live on Facebook most Thursdays at 7 p.m. central.

You're Invited!

RESET

women's conference

ROSE HILL CHURCH

12099 ROSE HILL RD, LANGFORD SD

SATURDAY, MARCH 11, 2023

9:30 AM - 2:00 PM

*Women and girls of all generations
are welcome to enjoy a day to reset.*

GUEST SPEAKERS

**PASTORS LISA PALMER
AND MICAH LOMBARDI, A
MOTHER-DAUGHTER TEAM**



REGISTER ONLINE

**THIS IS A FREE EVENT.
REGISTER BY SCANNING
THE QR CODE OR AT
ROSEHILLEFC.COM**

CHILDCARE WILL BE AVAILABLE

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GDILIVE.COM

REGION 1A GIRLS' BASKETBALL AT MILBANK

Monday, Feb. 20, 2023 around 7:30 p.m.

Join Shane Clark with the play-by-play action on [GDILIVE.COM](https://gdilive.com)

Game sponsored by

Bahr Spray Foam

Bary Keith at Harr Motors

Bierman Farm Service

Dacotah Bank

S & S Lumber

Groton Ag Solutions

Groton American Legion

Groton Chiropractic Clinic

Groton Ford

Harry Implement

John Sieh Agency

Lori's Pharmacy

Love to Travel

Weber Landscaping

Weismantel Insurance Agency



\$5 ticket to watch can be purchased at [GDILIVE.COM](https://gdilive.com).

GDI Subscribers can watch for free

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SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

COMMENTARY

Will South Dakota be ready when other states come for our water?

SETH TUPPER

FEBRUARY 19, 2023 7:00 AM

The massive volume of reservoirs on the Missouri River is one of the nation's least-appreciated public resources, but that could change as Western states grow more desperate for water.

"They're tapped out, and so logic tells you they have to go to the next plentiful resource, which ultimately is the Missouri River," said Troy Larson, executive director of the Lewis and Clark Regional Water System based in Tea.

Larson is one of the South Dakota water leaders starting to discuss the possibility of a Western-state rush for Missouri River water.

More about that in a minute.

First, let's consider what Western water officials will discover when they peek over the Rocky Mountains, gaze across the plains, and evaluate the six Missouri River reservoirs.

Lake Sakakawea in North Dakota, Lake Oahe in South Dakota and North Dakota, and Fort Peck Lake in Montana rank as the nation's third, fourth and fifth largest reservoirs, respectively. Add in the other three reservoirs – Lake Sharpe, Lake Francis Case and Lewis and Clark Lake, all in South Dakota – and the total system capacity rises to a mind-boggling 24 trillion gallons.

That doesn't mean the Missouri River is immune to problems. Droughts and management decisions can reduce water levels, while the competing demands of water pipelines, hydroelectric power generation, flood protection, recreation and downstream barge traffic often collide. All the while, sediment is building up in the reservoirs, creating a slow-moving and expensive problem that so far lacks a solution.

But the fact remains that all the water in the reservoirs lies within three states with a combined population of less than 3 million. In other words, said Larson, "There is far more water going by us in the Missouri River than we will ever use."

Western water woes

Meanwhile, 40 million people in seven Western states are confronting the possibility of running out of water. They rely on the Colorado River, which is compromised by population growth, agricultural irrigation and drought.

Six of those states – including our neighbor, Wyoming – recently agreed to a new management framework for the river and its imperiled reservoirs, Lake Mead and Lake Powell (the No. 1 and 2 largest-capacity reservoirs in the nation). But if they don't convince California to join the agreement, they'll have to accept water reductions imposed by the federal government.

Those negotiations, however they turn out, are unlikely to fix the long-term problem: too many demands on a single, shrinking source of water. The affected states may have to consider other solutions, which could include importing water from the Missouri River.

The federal government analyzed that idea in a 2012 study. At a cost of up to \$14 billion and with all sorts of technical, environmental, political and land-acquisition challenges standing in the way, Interior Secretary Ken Salazar dismissed pipelines as "impractical and not feasible."

More recently, the Colorado Conservation Board told me in a written statement, "At this time, the concept of a pipeline from the Missouri River is not part of any discussion or alternatives for addressing Colorado River issues."

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But other states already view the Missouri River as a solution to their water woes. In Kansas, a ground-water management district hauled 6,000 gallons of river water to the southwest part of the state last year to test a proposed aqueduct, as part of an effort to prevent depletion of the Ogallala Aquifer.

Larson thinks more states will covet the Missouri River, especially as other water options dry up. "If you don't have it," Larson said, "you'll pay anything to get it."

'Only a matter of time'

There's nothing preventing an out-of-state person or entity from seeking a Missouri River water right in South Dakota. Applications go to a state board that generally approves them if water is available and the application is for a "beneficial" use; however, requests for more than 10,000 acre-feet per year require legislative approval.

Because water rights are ranked by date, rights obtained today are better than those obtained tomorrow. If there's a dispute or a period of low water, earlier rights-holders get their water first.

What does that mean for South Dakota? Larson and other water leaders say it's time to inventory the state's existing water supply, to estimate current and future needs, to obtain water rights for those needs, and to get busy extending and building pipelines – which, as South Dakotans know from experience, can take billions of dollars and decades of planning and construction.

Some of that work is underway. State government, flush with federal stimulus money, awarded \$600 million for water and wastewater projects last year. A group of water officials called Water 2040 has formed to coordinate efforts across the state. Several pipeline projects are in the planning stages, including the Dakota Mainstem Regional Water System (focusing on the central and southern portions of eastern South Dakota), the Western Dakota Regional Water System, and Water Investment in Northern South Dakota. And the existing Lewis and Clark Regional Water System continues to grow.

Additionally, legislators are mulling proposals to devote more federal money from a state budget surplus to water development.

All of that work is important, and it must continue. Otherwise, South Dakotans could end up standing in line for their own water when other states come calling.

"We firmly believe it's only a matter of time," Larson said.

Largest-capacity reservoirs in the U.S.

Lake Mead(Arizona/Nevada): 28.945 million acre-feet

Lake Powell(Arizona/Utah): 26.215 million acre-feet

Lake Sakakawea (North Dakota): 24.3 million acre-feet

Lake Oahe (South Dakota/North Dakota): 23.5 million acre-feet

Fort Peck Lake(Montana): 19.1 million acre-feet

Seth is editor-in-chief of South Dakota Searchlight. He was previously a supervising senior producer for South Dakota Public Broadcasting and a newspaper journalist in Rapid City and Mitchell.

Some Republicans look to 'take care of our house' before cutting taxes

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER - FEBRUARY 18, 2023 7:00 AM

PIERRE — Gov. Kristi Noem announced in her budget address two months ago that 2023 was the "right time" to cut taxes and eliminate the sales tax on food in South Dakota.

Several legislators echoed that sentiment, flooding the agenda shortly after the 2023 legislative session began with more tax cut bills.

But some legislators have grown more cautious about tax cuts since the session began.

Some now believe this is the time to make smart choices with extra revenue and support ongoing programs instead of cutting the state's largest source of income.

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Senate Majority Whip Helene Duhamel, R-Rapid City, said there is "growing sentiment" among the chamber's Republican caucus in favor of strategic investments before enacting a tax cut.

"There are people in the conservative position saying, 'Let's take care of our house, and if we're still in that position in a few years, then we can take a look at that then,'" Duhamel said in Thursday's Republican leadership press conference.

High sales tax collections 'can't continue'

Earlier this week, the Joint Committee on Appropriations adopted a revenue projection of \$2.39 billion for fiscal year 2024. While that's the highest revenue projection in state history and \$189 million more than Noem's projected fiscal year 2024 general fund revenue, the committee still considered it a conservative projection.

Legislators who pushed for an even more conservative revenue projection were wary of how long that revenue growth would continue. Federal stimulus money will run out eventually and inflation is expected to decline to 2.3% in fiscal year 2024, according to the Bureau of Finance and Management.

While sales tax collections are higher than typical right now, personal income has begun to dip. Derek Johnson, state economist with the governor's Bureau of Finance and Management, expects sales tax collections to drop soon after.

"This can't continue. The sales tax collections can't continue to be above personal income," Johnson told the Joint Appropriations Committee on Tuesday. "Regardless of where inflation is, people can only spend the money that they have."

About 60% of South Dakota's revenue is derived from state sales and use tax receipts. South Dakota is one of nine states without an income tax.

"We've got a really low tax burden the way it is," said Senate Majority Leader Casy Crabtree, R-Madison. "We'll be very cautious and prudent going forward with this. Just like you would at a business and at home, you look two years, five years, 10 years down the road when budgeting."

Millions needed in funding for Republican priorities

The growth in state sales tax over the last two years has put the Legislature in a "position to consider" tax cuts, said House Majority Leader Will Mortenson, R-Pierre.

But at the same time, the party has a laundry list of priorities that requires funding from the state, including freezing tuition for the state's higher education institutions and increasing support for education, Medicaid care providers and state employees.

Duhamel hopes to use \$100 million of federal stimulus funds for water projects across the state. Her bill to accomplish that was referred Thursday to the Joint Appropriations Committee.

"We may never have this opportunity again," Duhamel said in testimony on the bill. "Especially if we remove the grocery tax and lose a hundred million ongoing, my fear is water will be in trouble."

Long term finances are a concern for the party as well. Crabtree said counties will require fiscal help to keep local governments from raising taxes themselves. The state will have to budget for potentially up to \$73 million over the next three years to support Medicaid expansion passed by South Dakota voters last year.

"I think it's fiscally prudent to start planning for that," said Mortenson. "We don't want to wait and start dealing with that in two years."

Minority House and Senate leaders Oren Lesmeister, D-Parade, and Reynold Nesiba, D-Sioux Falls, echoed similar ambitions during the Democrat Party leadership press conference on Thursday. But they believe the state has enough funds to both cut taxes and further support its programs.

"Let's fund the programs we have in place to 100% before we start cutting taxes," said Lesmeister, D-Parade.

What tax cuts are still on the table?

The largest proposed tax cut on the table is a reduction in the state sales and use tax by half a percentage point – on everything, not just food – that would cut \$168 million in taxes.

The bill, introduced by Rep. Chris Karr, R-Sioux Falls, would return the state tax rate to what it was before

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2016 when a half-percentage increase was implemented to support raising teacher salaries in the state. Despite that legislation, South Dakota currently ranks 50th in average teacher pay.

The second largest tax cut is the Noem-endorsed bill, which would eliminate the state sales tax on food. The bill's cost was originally estimated at \$102 million by the governor's Bureau of Finance and Management. The Legislative Research Council has since changed the estimated tax savings to \$120 million.

The third major tax cut bill would reduce property taxes for homeowners across the state. The proposal would cut taxes by over \$73 million as introduced, by exempting a home's first \$100,000 of value from taxation. But Rep. Tony Venhuizen, R-Sioux Falls, introduced an amendment to the bill on Thursday that would simplify the tax cut formula by setting the tax cut at \$300 per household.

"I think the idea was, 'let's just kind of cut to the chase,'" Venhuizen said. "And instead of having this complicated mechanism, let's just say it's a credit of \$300. It's much simpler."

Venhuizen said the House Republican Caucus is determining what tax cuts it will support. While the property tax cut would cost less to the state and apply only to South Dakota residents, it would not help renters across the state.

"That's clearly a disadvantage of that mechanism," Venhuizen said.

All three tax cut bills will be heard in the House Appropriations Committee on Tuesday.

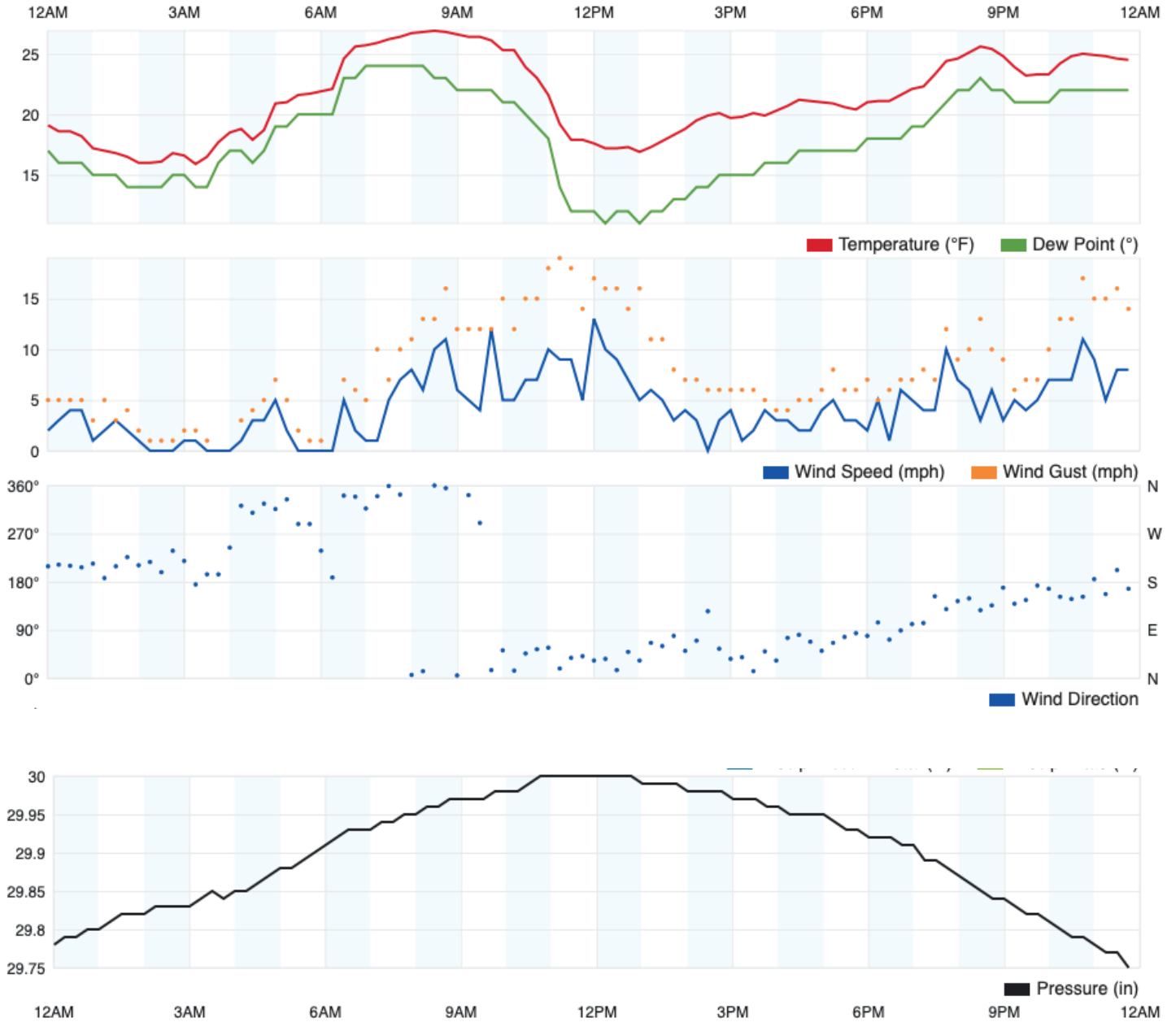
The day after that is Crossover Day in the Legislature, the deadline by which all bills must pass their house of origin.

Makenzie Huber is a lifelong South Dakotan whose work has won national and regional awards. She's spent five years as a journalist with experience reporting on workforce, development and business issues within the state.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Washington's Birthday	Tonight	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday
Mostly Cloudy and Breezy	Mostly Cloudy and Blustery then Mostly Cloudy	Snow and Patchy Blowing Snow	Snow Likely and Blowing Snow	Snow Likely and Blowing Snow	Heavy Snow and Blowing Snow	Snow and Blowing Snow then Slight Chance Snow
High: 32 °F ↓	Low: -3 °F	High: 14 °F	Low: -4 °F	High: 3 °F	Low: -7 °F	High: -1 °F



Prolonged Widespread Winter Storm

February 20, 2023
5:22 AM

Key Messages

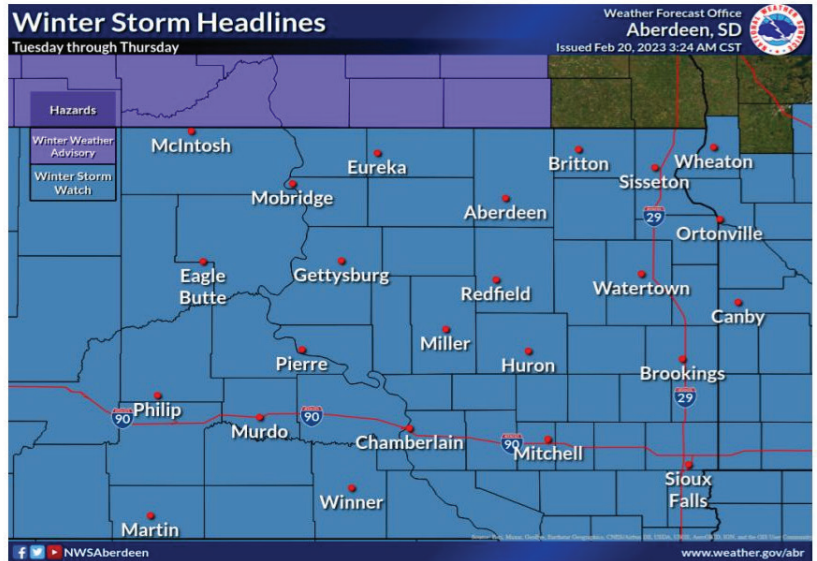
- Two rounds of snow: one on Tuesday and another, potentially more significant, round Wednesday into Thursday
- Strong winds Tuesday night through Thursday morning
- Arctic cold air and dangerous wind chills late Tuesday night through Friday morning

NEW Important Updates

- Winter Storm Watch remains in effect Tuesday through Thursday.

Next Scheduled Briefing

- Monday afternoon



Tuesday through Thursday

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

A significant winter storm remains on track to move through the region this week delivering a one, two punch of snowfall along with strong winds, blizzard conditions and dangerous wind chills. A Winter Storm Watch remains in effect for all of central and northeast South Dakota and west central Minnesota Tuesday through Thursday.

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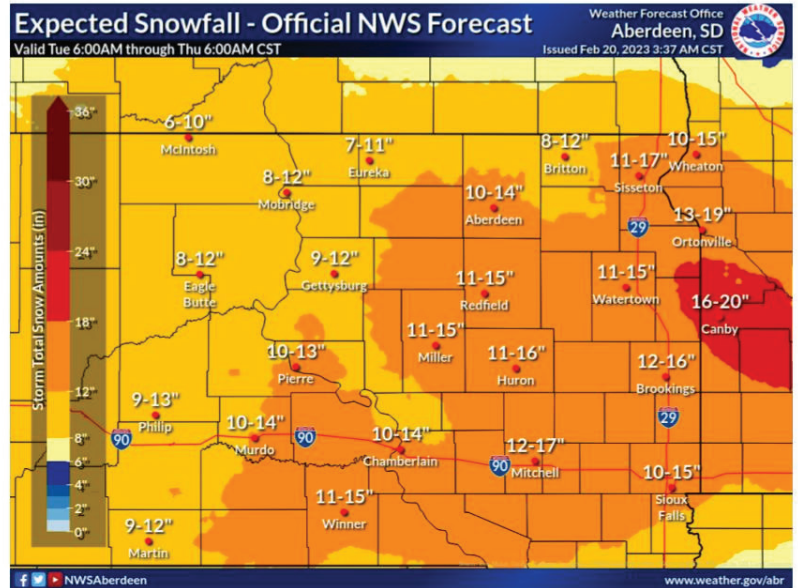
Snowfall Projections

February 20, 2023
5:22 AM

High forecast confidence for a significant winter storm mid-week

This graphic shows projected snowfall amounts **Tuesday through Wednesday night**. An additional 1 to 2 inches of snow is possible Thursday morning. Shifts in the storm system could alter these amounts.

There may be a lull in the precipitation late Tuesday night into Wednesday morning.



6 AM CST Tuesday To 6 AM CST Thursday



National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD



Potential Wind Gusts This Week

February 20, 2023
5:22 AM

Highest Wind Gusts will be Tuesday night through early Thursday

	Mon			Tue				Wed				Thu				Maximum
	6am	12pm	6pm	12am	6am	12pm	6pm	12am	6am	12pm	6pm	12am	6am	12pm	6pm	
Aberdeen	37	38	33	9	18	30	47	48	51	54	58	55	44	26	20	58
Britton	35	37	35	12	16	28	41	45	46	48	54	54	48	28	21	54
Eagle Butte	35	38	31	24	32	26	43	44	43	45	45	31	30	21	13	45
Eureka	39	41	32	10	32	36	43	48	46	48	49	44	36	23	16	49
Gettysburg	35	40	32	18	32	32	45	48	48	46	45	38	32	24	17	48
Kennebec	35	33	28	20	33	30	37	45	46	40	38	38	37	25	17	46
McIntosh	39	40	28	22	26	31	41	44	38	44	44	37	30	22	14	44
Milbank	31	37	39	26	14	20	30	33	38	44	48	49	44	28	23	49
Miller	35	37	30	14	30	31	37	46	47	47	48	43	37	24	17	48
Mobridge	35	37	28	17	26	30	38	38	37	47	48	35	29	22	15	48
Murdo	35	35	29	26	30	22	37	43	43	38	39	36	32	22	14	43
Pierre	30	35	31	22	30	24	38	41	38	39	39	32	28	21	14	41
Redfield	35	38	35	13	28	29	39	44	48	54	56	48	44	28	18	56
Sisseton	37	40	39	26	14	20	31	33	36	43	46	45	44	28	23	46
Watertown	30	38	37	20	18	28	37	45	49	54	56	49	46	28	21	56
Webster	37	45	41	21	21	33	43	49	54	56	60	54	48	28	22	60
Wheaton	29	37	38	25	12	18	25	30	33	36	44	44	41	25	23	44

*Table values in mph

Don't see your city? Check out weather.gov/forecastpoints

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Potential Wind Chills This Week

February 20, 2023
5:22 AM

Dangerous Wind Chills Wednesday Through Friday Morning

Minimum Wind Chill Forecast

	2/21	2/22				2/23				2/24				Minimum
	Tue 6pm	12am	6am	12pm	6pm	12am	6am	12pm	6pm	12am	6am	12pm	6pm	
Aberdeen	-13	-26	-29	-27	-29	-34	-34	-23	-27	-34	-35	-22	-15	-35
Britton	-15	-28	-30	-26	-29	-35	-36	-26	-28	-31	-32	-20	-18	-36
Eagle Butte	-16	-25	-26	-27	-31	-35	-35	-26	-30	-34	-34	-22	-16	-35
Eureka	-18	-32	-34	-29	-34	-37	-37	-25	-29	-35	-36	-23	-20	-37
Gettysburg	-15	-25	-26	-25	-30	-33	-35	-25	-30	-36	-37	-22	-15	-37
Kennebec	-1	-14	-17	-18	-25	-31	-32	-23	-28	-32	-30	-16	-6	-32
McIntosh	-18	-30	-32	-32	-35	-37	-37	-29	-30	-37	-37	-24	-21	-37
Milbank	-5	-12	-15	-11	-11	-21	-23	-17	-23	-29	-28	-14	-15	-29
Miller	-5	-19	-22	-23	-26	-30	-31	-22	-31	-34	-32	-22	-12	-34
Mobridge	-12	-24	-25	-24	-29	-33	-34	-22	-24	-33	-33	-16	-14	-34
Murdo	-3	-16	-18	-20	-28	-33	-34	-25	-27	-30	-30	-14	-4	-34
Pierre	-4	-13	-17	-16	-23	-28	-29	-19	-23	-29	-29	-16	-7	-29
Redfield	-6	-20	-23	-22	-26	-31	-32	-23	-29	-35	-36	-23	-15	-36
Sisseton	-7	-17	-20	-15	-16	-25	-27	-20	-25	-30	-31	-15	-16	-31
Watertown	-9	-18	-20	-17	-17	-27	-28	-20	-27	-32	-32	-17	-15	-32
Webster	-13	-23	-26	-23	-25	-33	-35	-24	-28	-33	-33	-21	-18	-35
Wheaton	-6	-16	-18	-14	-15	-24	-25	-20	-25	-30	-31	-18	-18	-31

*Table values in °F

Don't see your city? Check out weather.gov/forecastpoints

**Created: 3 am CST Mon 2/20/2023

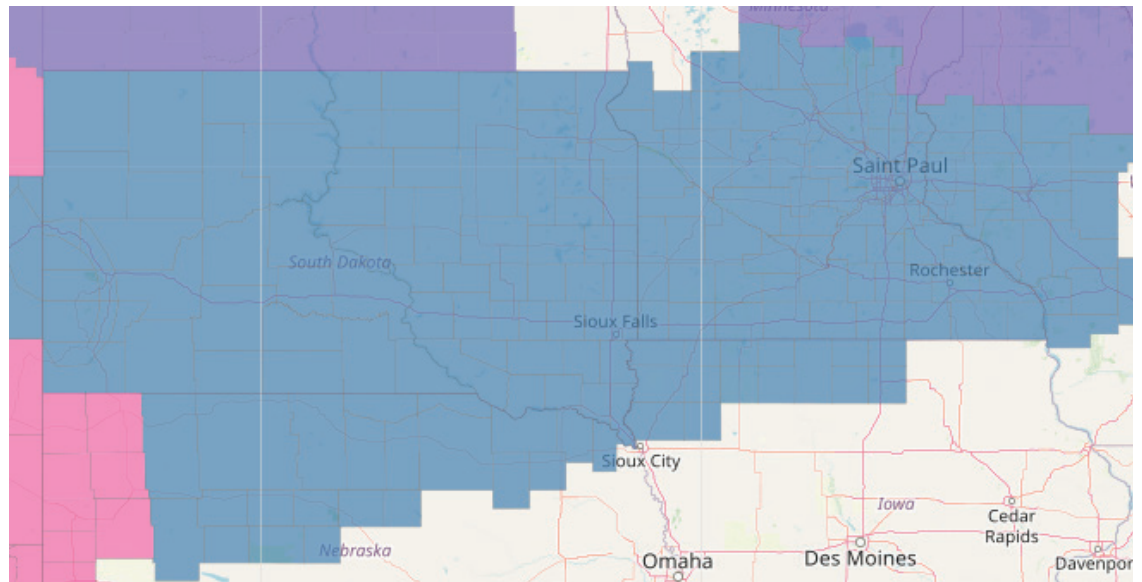
***Values are minimums over the period beginning at the time shown.



National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

The entire state of South Dakota is under a Winter Storm Watch.



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Winter Storm Watch

URGENT - WINTER WEATHER MESSAGE

National Weather Service Aberdeen SD

417 AM CST Mon Feb 20 2023

Traverse-Big Stone-Brown-Marshall-Roberts-Day-Spink-Clark-Codington-Grant-Hamlin-Deuel-
Including the cities of Wheaton, Ortonville, Aberdeen, Britton, Sisseton, Webster, Redfield, Clark, Water-
town, Milbank, Hayti, and Clear Lake
417 AM CST Mon Feb 20 2023

...WINTER STORM WATCH REMAINS IN EFFECT FROM TUESDAY AFTERNOON THROUGH THURSDAY MORNING...

* WHAT...Heavy snow possible. Total snow accumulations of 12 to 19 inches possible. Winds could gust as high as 55 mph. Blizzard conditions possible. Wind chills as low as 35 below zero.

* WHERE...Portions of west central Minnesota and northeast South Dakota.

* WHEN...From Tuesday afternoon through late Tuesday night. A second period from Wednesday afternoon through Thursday morning.

* IMPACTS...Travel could be very difficult to impossible Tuesday evening through early Thursday morning. Widespread blowing snow could significantly reduce visibility. The hazardous conditions could impact the morning and evening commutes this week. The dangerously cold wind chills as low as 35 below zero could cause frostbite on exposed skin in as little as 10 minutes.

* ADDITIONAL DETAILS...The first round of snow could occur Tuesday afternoon through late Tuesday night, with 4 to 7 inches of snow possible. After a break in significant falling snow from late Tuesday night through mid day Wednesday, a second round of snow could occur from Wednesday afternoon through Thursday morning, with 8 to 12 inches of snow possible. Blizzard conditions could be possible from Tuesday evening through early Thursday morning.

PRECAUTIONARY/PREPAREDNESS ACTIONS...

Monitor the latest forecasts for updates on this situation.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 27 °F at 8:14 AM

Low Temp: 16 °F at 3:11 AM

Wind: 20 mph at 11:52 PM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 10 hours, 43 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 61 in 1930

Record Low: -30 in 1918

Average High: 30

Average Low: 8

Average Precip in Feb.: 0.42

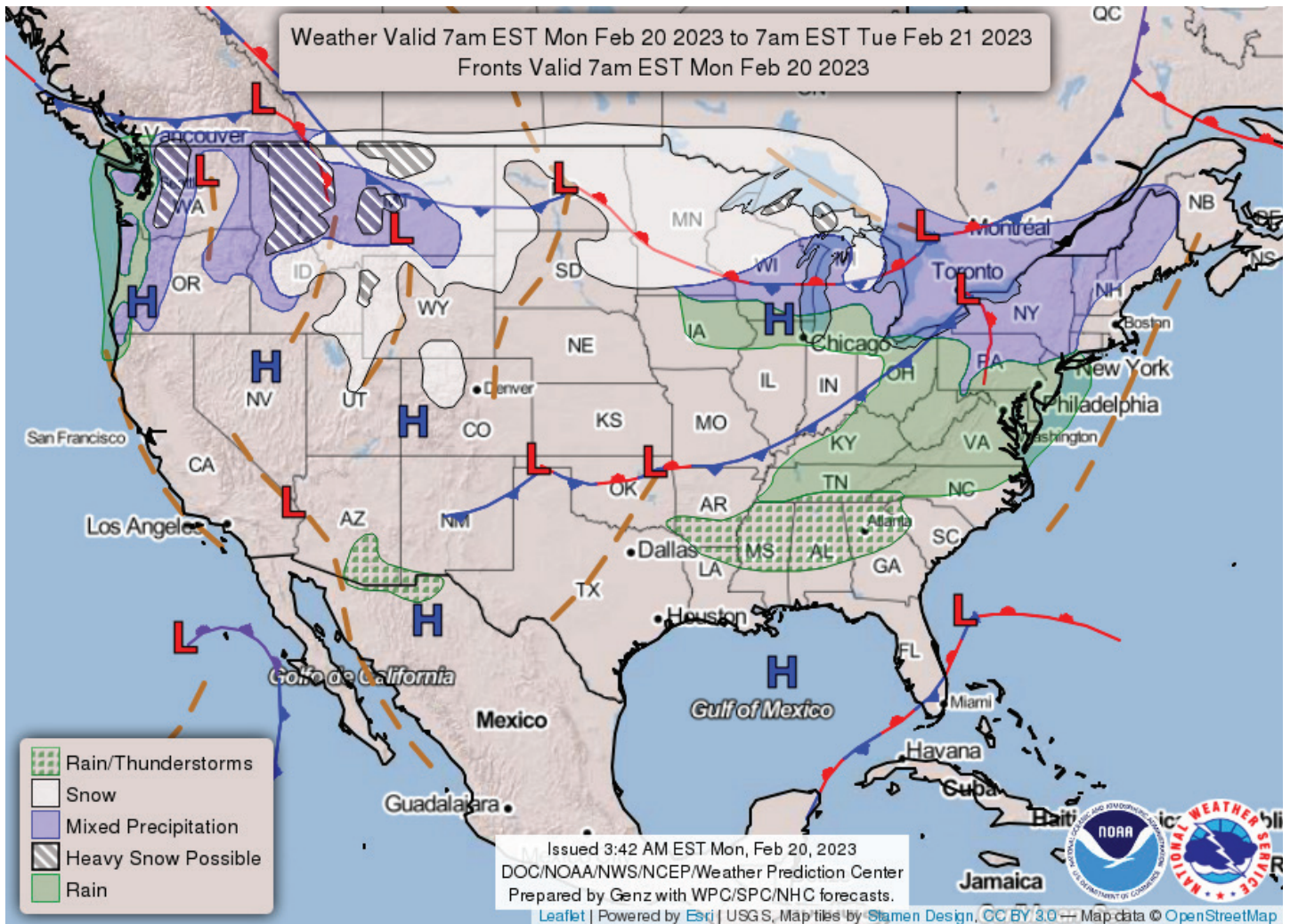
Precip to date in Feb.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 0.97

Precip Year to Date: 0.25

Sunset Tonight: 5:07:51 PM

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:22:40 AM



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Today in Weather History

February 20th, 1962: A round of heavy snow fell across the southeastern half of the state from the 20th through the 22nd, producing 10 inches. Snowfall amounts included 5 inches at Bryant, 6 inches at Kennebec, 7 inches at Redfield, Brookings, Mitchell, and Sioux Falls, 8 inches at Miller, and 10 inches at Huron. Snowfall amounts for the record-setting month of February 1962 ranged from 30 - 50 inches across much of the southeast part of the state.

February 20th, 1997: Warm weather resulted in snowmelt runoff and ice breakup on the Bad River. As a result, the Bad River went above flood stage from Capa to Fort Pierre late in the evening of the 20th. The flood stage at Fort Pierre is 21 feet, and the river rose to around 25 feet on the 21st. The Bad River went below flood stage during the afternoon of the 22nd. Lowlands near the river were flooded along with some county roads, with some of the roads damaged. Late in the evening of the 20th, the trailer court on the southern edge of Fort Pierre was evacuated, where they did some sandbagging. Also, on the west side of Fort Pierre, some roads were flooded.

February 20th, 2011: The snowfall/blizzard event on 20-21 February 2011 produced yet another round of impressive snowfall totals across central and northeastern South Dakota and west-central Minnesota. Storm total snowfall amounts ranged from 8" to 12" with locally higher amounts of more than 18" reported in a few locations.

1805 - The Potomac River was opened after being closed by ice for a period of two months. (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders - 1987)

1898 - Eastern Wisconsin experienced their biggest snowstorm of record. Racine received thirty inches, and drifts around Milwaukee measured fifteen feet high. (David Ludlum)

1912: A strong area of low pressure produced snow in Amarillo and high winds to Austin, Texas. In the warm sector of the low, severe storms developed and produced an estimated F3 tornado in Shreveport, Louisiana. The tornado killed nine people and injured 50 others. The tornado passed near Centenary College, where windows were damaged, and the grandstand at the ballpark was partially damaged. In addition, significant damage occurred in the Freewater section, where an estimated 75 to 100 houses were demolished.

1912: During the 20th and 21st, a severe snowstorm attended by high winds lasting from 34 to 30 hours swept over Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio. The amount of snow that fell in this storm was not only large, but it drifted severely. In many places, snowbanks 5 feet and higher were formed, railroad cuts were filled, highways in many places were impassable, electric service wires of all kinds were temporarily put out of commission, all trade and traffic generally demoralized. This snowstorm was part of a general disturbance that developed over the southwest on the 20th and moved northeastward over the Central and Eastern States, increasing in strength during the 21st and 22nd, and which proved to be one of the most severe and most extensive general disturbances that have passed over this section of the country for several years past. Besides the heavy snow in the northern part of the storm, heavy rains, gales, and destructive thunderstorms attended over most of the southern and eastern portions. Wind velocities of 50 to 75 miles per hour were reported at many places during the passage of this storm. Some wind blew steadily at high velocities for several hours.

1953 - A snowstorm in Nebraska, South Dakota, Iowa and Minnesota produced drifts ten feet high which derailed trains. (David Ludlum)

1995: The temperature at the Civic Center in Los Angeles, California, soared to 95 degrees, the highest ever recorded at the location during February.

2004: A nor'easter brought heavy snow and strong winds to Nova Scotia and Prince Edwards Island from February 17th through 20th, 2004. The Maritimers called this storm White Juan, a hurricane disguised as a blizzard. Halifax, Yarmouth, and Charlottetown broke all-time 24-hour snowfall records, receiving about 3 feet of snow. The 34.8 inches of snow on February 19th nearly doubled its previous record for a single day for Halifax.

Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

A SPINE AND A SPIRIT

Kenneth was a shy eight-year-old who loved to read. On one occasion his Sunday school teacher asked him to read part of the story of Daniel. In reading one of the verses, he accidentally read "an exceptional spine was within him" rather than "an excellent spirit was within him." Both phrases, however, clearly describe who Daniel was.

Daniel was recognized for his wise insight, great wisdom, and prophetic visions. As he rose to power and prestige with the king, the other palace administrators became jealous of his privileged position. In their effort to get rid of Daniel, they were successful in persuading the king to outlaw prayer. The fact that prayer was "outlawed" did not matter to Daniel, and rather than give in to political pressure, he continued to pray boldly and publicly to the Lord, his God.

We all recall with pleasure the amazing miracle God performed by protecting him when he was thrown into a den of hungry lions. God was with him and guarded him against any harm. Daniel was faithful to God and God, in turn, was faithful to him and blessed him.

Daniel was able to "show his exceptional spine" every time he was challenged to surrender to the demands of a sinful world. It was the "excellent spirit" that came from his relationship with God that gave him his "exceptional spine." He knew that His God was sovereign, and would guide him and give him His favor for being faithful.

Prayer: Father, give me a faith that will not flinch and a spine that will not shrink when tempted to compromise. Assure me of Your presence and power as I honor You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Now Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators and the satraps by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom. Daniel 6:3



We all need the encouragement, comfort, and peace that comes through God's grace. Our daily devotionals, known as Seeds of Hope, have been a means through which thousands of people have experienced this grace. Each devotional comes from God's Word and we pray this good "seed" finds good soil in your heart. Our aim is that the Seeds of Hope will be a great source of daily encouragement to you and that God will use them to draw you near to Him

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2023 Community Events

- 01/29/2023 Groton Robotics Pancake Feed, 10am-1pm, Community Center
- 01/29/2023 85th Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm (Last Sunday of January)
- 01/31/2023-02/03/2023 Lion's Club Prom & Formal Dress Consignment Drop Off 6-9pm, Community Center
- 02/04/2023-02/05/2023 Lion's Club Prom & Formal Dress Consignment Sale 1-5pm, Community Center
- 02/25/2023 Littles and Me, Art Making 10-11:30am, Wage Memorial Library
- 03/25/2023 Spring Vendor Fair, 10am-3pm, Community Center
- 04/01/2023 Lion's Club Easter Egg Hunt 10am Sharp at the City Park (Saturday a week before Easter)
- 04/01/2023 Dueling Duo Baseball/Softball Fundraiser at the Legion Post #39 6-11:30pm
- 04/06/2023 Groton Career Development Event
- 04/22/2023 Firemen's Spring Social at the Fire Station 7pm-12:30am (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
- 04/23/2023 Princess Prom 4:30-8pm (Sunday after GHS Prom)
- 05/06/2023 Lion's Club Spring Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm (1st Saturday in May)
- 05/29/2023 Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services (Memorial Day)
- 06/16/2023 SDSU Alumni and Friends Golf Tournament
- 07/04/2023 Couples Firecracker Golf Tournament
- 07/09/2023 Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm (Sunday Mid-July)
- 07/26/2023 GGA Burger Fundraiser Lunch at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 08/04/2023 Wine on Nine 6pm
- 08/11/2023 GHS Basketball Golf Tournament
- 09/09/2023 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
- 09/10/2023 Couples Sunflower Golf Tournament
- 10/14/2023 Pumpkin Fest at the City Park 10am-3pm
- 10/31/2023 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm (working day on or closest to Halloween)
- 10/31/2023 United Methodist Church Trunk or Treat 5:30-7pm
- 11/23/2023 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm (Thanksgiving)
- 12/02/2023 Tour of Homes & Holiday Party
- 12/09/2023 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services 9-11am

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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:
02.17.23

2 33 38 57 70 13

MegaPlier: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$104,000,000

NEXT 1 Days 15 Hrs 19
DRAW: Mins 6 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
02.18.23

5 17 25 48 52 1

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$37,560,000

NEXT 15 Hrs 19 Mins 5
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
02.19.23

8 16 31 39 47 7

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT 14 Hrs 49 Mins 5
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
02.18.23

1 2 18 27 31

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$60,000

NEXT 2 Days 15 Hrs 19
DRAW: Mins 6 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
02.18.23

4 36 39 44 46 20

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT 15 Hrs 18 Mins 6
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
02.18.23

8 21 31 32 37 23

Power Play: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$87,000,000

NEXT 15 Hrs 18 Mins 6
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

News from the Associated Press

Winter storm to roll across US northwest, Rockies this week

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP) — A massive winter storm that will push across the northern U.S. in coming days could dump several feet of snow at higher elevations and bring dangerously cold temperatures, forecasters said Sunday.

The arctic blast will sweep into the Pacific Northwest and then push across the northern Rocky Mountains and onto the Great Plains. It will bring heavy snow and strong winds, the National Weather Service said.

Forecasters issued winter storm warnings and advisories across the region beginning Sunday afternoon. Lesser snowfall amounts were expected at lower elevations.

Temperatures will drop drastically after Tuesday leading to dangerous wind chills, the weather service said. Snow was also forecast across portions of North and South Dakota.

Biden visits Ukraine ahead of war anniversary: 'Kyiv stands'

By EVAN VUCCI, JOHN LEICESTER, AAMER MADHANI and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — President Joe Biden made an unannounced visit to Ukraine on Monday to meet with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, a striking gesture of solidarity that comes days before the one-year anniversary of Russia's invasion of the country.

Biden spent more than five hours in the Ukrainian capital, meeting Zelenskyy at Mariinsky Palace, honoring the country's fallen soldiers and meeting with U.S. embassy staff in the war-torn country. In his remarks with Zelenskyy, Biden recalled the fears nearly a year ago that Russia's invasion forces might quickly take city. "One year later, Kyiv stands," Biden said, jamming his finger for emphasis on his podium decorated with the U.S. and Ukrainian flags. "And Ukraine stands. Democracy stands. The Americans stand with you, and the world stands with you."

The Ukraine visit comes at a crucial moment in the war as Biden looks to keep allies unified in their support for Ukraine as the war is expected to intensify with both sides preparing for spring offensives. Zelenskyy is pressing allies to speed up delivery of pledged weapon systems and is calling on the West to deliver fighter jets to Ukraine — something that Biden to date has declined to do.

In Kyiv, Biden announced an additional half-billion dollars in U.S. assistance — on top of the more than \$50 billion already provided — including shells for howitzers, anti-tank missiles, air surveillance radars and other aid but no new advanced weaponry.

Ukraine has also been pushing for battlefield systems that would allow its forces to strike Russian targets that have been moved back from frontline areas, out of the range of HIMARS missiles that have already been delivered. Zelenskyy said he and Biden spoke about "long-range weapons and the weapons that may still be supplied to Ukraine even though it wasn't supplied before." But he did not detail any new commitments.

"Our negotiations were very fruitful," Zelenskyy added.

Biden also got a short firsthand taste of the terror that Ukrainians have lived with for close to a year, as air raids sirens howled over the capital just as he and Zelenskyy were exiting the gold-domed St. Michael's Cathedral, which they visited together. Looking solemn, they continued unperturbed as they laid two wreaths and held a moment of silence at the Wall of Remembrance honoring Ukrainian soldiers killed since 2014, the year Russia annexed Ukraine's Crimean peninsula and Russian-backed fighting erupted in eastern Ukraine.

Biden's mission with his visit to Kyiv, which comes ahead of a scheduled trip to Warsaw, Poland, is to underscore that the United States is prepared to stick with Ukraine "as long as it takes" to repel Russian forces even as public opinion polling suggests that U.S. and allied support for providing weaponry and direct economic assistance has started to soften. For Zelenskyy, the symbolism of having the U.S. president stand side by side with him on Ukrainian land as the anniversary nears is no small thing as he prods the

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U.S. and European allies to provide more advanced weaponry and to step up the pace of delivery.

"I thought it was critical that there not be any doubt, none whatsoever, about U.S. support for Ukraine in the war," Biden said.

Biden's visit marked an act of defiance against Russian President Vladimir Putin, who had hoped his military would swiftly overrun Kyiv within days. Biden recalled speaking with Zelenskyy on the night of the invasion, saying, "That dark night one year ago, the world was literally at the time bracing for the fall of Kyiv. Perhaps even the end of Ukraine."

A year later, the Ukrainian capital remains firmly in Ukrainian control. Although a semblance of normalcy has returned to the city, regular air raid sirens and frequent missile and killer-drone attacks against military and civilian infrastructure across the country are a near-constant reminder that the war is still fiercely raging. The bloodiest fighting is, for the moment, concentrated in the country's east, particularly around the city of Bakhmut, where Russian offensives are underway.

Biden warned that the "brutal and unjust war" is far from won. "The cost that Ukraine has had to bear has been extraordinarily high. And the sacrifices have been far too great," Biden said. "We know that there'll be very difficult days and weeks and years ahead. But Russia's aim was to wipe Ukraine off the map. Putin's war of conquest is failing."

"He's counting on us not sticking together," Biden said of the Russian leader. "He thought he could outlast us. I don't think he's thinking that right now. God knows what he's thinking, but I don't think he's thinking that. But he's just been plain wrong. Plain wrong."

The trip gave Biden an opportunity to get a firsthand look at the devastation the Russian invasion has caused on Ukraine. Thousands of Ukrainian troops and civilians have been killed, millions of refugees have fled the war, and Ukraine has suffered tens of billions of dollars of infrastructure damage.

Biden, wearing a blue suit and his signature aviator sunglasses, pledged long-term support for Ukraine, saying that "freedom is priceless. It's worth fighting for for as long as it takes."

"And that's how long we're going to be with you, Mr. President, for as long as it takes," Biden promised. Zelenskyy, speaking in English, responded: "We'll do it."

The Ukrainian leader, wearing a black sweatshirt, as has become his wartime habit, said through an interpreter that the "wide discussion" in their meeting "brings us closer to the victory" — hopefully, he added, this year.

"Right now, in Ukraine, the destiny of the international order ... is decided," Zelenskyy said. He added words of gratitude to Biden and to the American people for their support. "Ukraine is grateful to you, Mr. President, to all the U.S. citizens, to all those who cherish freedom just as we cherish them."

Though Western surface-to-air missile systems have bolstered Ukraine's defenses, the visit marked the rare occasion when a U.S. president has traveled to a conflict zone where the U.S. or its allies did not have control over the airspace. The White House would not go into specifics but said that "basic communication with the Russians occurred to ensure deconfliction" shortly before Biden's visit in an effort to avoid any miscalculation that could bring the two nuclear-armed nations into direct conflict.

The U.S. military does not have a presence in Ukraine other than a small detachment of Marines guarding the embassy in Kyiv, making Biden's visit more complicated than other recent visits by prior U.S. leaders to war zones.

While Biden was in Ukraine, U.S. surveillance planes, including E-3 Sentry airborne radar and an electronic RC-135W Rivet Joint aircraft, were keeping watch over Kyiv from Polish airspace.

Speculation has been building for weeks that Biden would pay a visit to Ukraine around the Feb. 24 anniversary of the Russian invasion. But the White House repeatedly had said that no presidential trip to Ukraine was planned, even after the Poland visit was announced earlier this month.

Since early morning on Monday many main streets and central blocks in Kyiv were cordoned without any official explanation. Later people started sharing videos of long motorcades of cars driving along the streets where the access was restricted.

At the White House, planning for Biden's visit to Kyiv was tightly held — with a relatively small group of aides briefed on the plans — because of security concerns. The president traveled with an usually small

entourage, with just a few senior aides and two journalists, to maintain secrecy.

Asked by a reporter on Friday if Biden might include stops beyond Poland, White House National Security Council spokesman John Kirby replied, "Right now, the trip is going to be in Warsaw." Moments later — and without prompting — Kirby added, "I said 'right now.' The trip will be in -- to Warsaw. I didn't want to make it sound like I was alluding to a change to it."

Biden quietly departed from Joint Base Andrews near Washington shortly at 4:15 a.m. on Sunday, making a stop at Ramstein Air Base in Germany before making his way into Ukraine. He arrived in Kyiv at 8 a.m. on Monday.

Other western leaders have made the trip to Kyiv since the start of the war.

In June, French President Emmanuel Macron, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and then Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi traveled together by night train to Kyiv to meet with Zelenskyy. British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak visited Kyiv in November shortly after taking office.

This is Biden's first visit to a war zone as president. His recent predecessors, Donald Trump, Barack Obama and George W. Bush, made surprise visits to Afghanistan and Iraq during their presidencies to meet with U.S. troops and those countries' leaders.

North Korea fires 2 missiles in tests condemned by neighbors

By HYUNG-JIN KIM and KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea fired two short-range ballistic missiles into the sea east of the country Monday in its second test launch in three days, prompting Japan to request an emergency meeting of the U.N. Security Council.

The launches continue a tit-for-tat exchange that began Saturday, and follow a year in which North Korea launched more than 70 missiles, the most ever. Pyongyang has recently escalated nuclear threats and threatened an "unprecedentedly" strong response to annual U.S.-South Korea military drills, which it views as preparation for an invasion.

South Korea's military said it detected two missile launches Monday morning from a town on North Korea's west coast, which were later confirmed by North Korean official media. Japan said both missiles landed in waters outside Japan's exclusive economic zone and that no damage to aircraft or vessels in the area was reported, but they flew distances that suggest most of South Korea is in range.

The tests follow an intercontinental ballistic missile launch Saturday, the country's first since Jan. 1, and a U.S. bomber flight over the Korean peninsula conducted in response Sunday.

Both South Korea and Japan condemned recent North Korean launches as threats to international peace and violations of U.N. Security Council resolutions that ban any ballistic activities by North Korea. Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida told reporters that Tokyo was requesting an emergency Security Council meeting to respond to recent North Korean launches.

An initial Security Council briefing led by Assistant Secretary-General for political affairs Khaled Khiri was set for later Monday.

Further council action against North Korea is unlikely. China and Russia, both veto-wielding powers embroiled in confrontations with Washington, opposed U.S.-led attempts to add fresh sanctions last year.

"The frequency of using the Pacific as our firing range depends upon the U.S. forces' action character," Kim Yo Jong, the powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, said in the official translation of a statement carried by state media. "We are well aware of the movement of U.S. forces' strategic strike means, (which are) recently getting brisk around the Korean Peninsula."

She likely referred to Sunday's U.S. flight of B-1B long-range, supersonic bombers for separate training with South Korea and Japan, conducted in response to North Korea's Saturday ICBM test.

North Korea typically responds to U.S. B-1B flights, which can carry a huge payload of conventional weapons, with aggressive statements or military demonstrations of its own.

Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirokazu Matsuno said that North Korea may make further provocations, such as more missile launches and nuclear tests.

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In her statement earlier Sunday, Kim Yo Jong threatened to take additional "powerful" steps over upcoming military drills between the United States and South Korea.

North Korea has said many of its previous weapons tests were warnings over U.S.-South Korean military drills.

The South Korean and U.S. militaries have conducted larger and more frequent drills this year, in response to escalating missile tests, and because concerns about COVID-19 are receding. The two militaries plan to hold a table-top exercise this week to hone a joint response to use of nuclear weapons by North Korea. The allies also plan to conduct a joint computer simulated exercise and field training in March.

North Korea has repeatedly condemned regular South Korea-U.S. military drills as practice for an invasion, though the allies say their exercises are defensive in nature. Some observers say North Korea often uses its rivals' drills as a pretext to test and improve its weapons systems. Many experts believe that North Korea ultimately plans to win international recognition as a legitimate nuclear state to get international sanctions lifted and receive other outside concessions.

Hours after Monday's launches, South Korea's Foreign Ministry said Seoul placed unilateral sanctions on four individuals and five institutions it said were involved in illicit activities supporting the North's nuclear arms development and evasion of sanctions. South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol's government has placed sanctions on 31 individuals and 35 organizations, mostly from North Korea, for supporting the North's nuclear ambitions, but these steps are mostly symbolic since the two countries do not have business ties.

The U.S. Indo-Pacific Command said the new launches highlight "the destabilizing impact" of North Korea's unlawful weapons programs. It said the U.S. commitments to the defense of South Korea and Japan "remain ironclad."

The North said the tests involved the new 600-millimeter multiple rocket launcher system, which could be armed with "tactical" nuclear weapons for battlefield use. South Korean defense officials describe the weapons system as a short-range ballistic missile.

The official Korean Central News Agency said the tests simulated strikes on targets up to 395 kilometers (245 miles) away.

According to Japanese and South Korean assessments, the North Korean missiles flew at a maximum altitude of 50-100 kilometers (30-60 miles) and a distance of 340-400 kilometers (210-250 miles).

North Korea has claimed to have missiles capable of striking both the U.S. mainland and South Korea with nuclear weapons, but many foreign experts have said North Korea still has not mastered some key technologies, such as building warheads small enough to be mounted on missiles and ensuring those warheads survive atmospheric reentry.

In her statement Monday, Kim Yo Jong reiterated that North Korea has reentry vehicle technology. She also hit back at South Korean experts who questioned whether North Korea's ICBMs would be functional in real-war situations.

Putin's Ukraine gamble seen as biggest threat to his rule

By ANDREW KATELL Associated Press

Vladimir Putin says he learned from his boyhood brawls in his native St. Petersburg: "If you want to win a fight, you have to carry it through to the end, as if it were the most decisive battle of your life."

That lesson, cited in the most recent biography of the Russian president, seems to be guiding him as his invasion of Ukraine suffers setbacks and stalemates. The Kremlin strongman, who started the war on Feb. 24, 2022, and could end it in a minute, appears to be determined to prevail, ruthlessly and at all costs.

Stoking his countrymen this month on the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Stalingrad that turned around Moscow's fortunes in World War II, he said: "The willingness to go beyond for the sake of the Motherland and the truth, to do the impossible, has always been and remains in the blood, in the character of our multiethnic people."

But so far, Putin's gamble in invading his smaller and weaker neighbor seems to have backfired spectacularly and created the biggest threat to his more than two-decade-long rule.

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HISTORY AND MODERN ROADBLOCKS

He began the "special military operation" in the name of Ukraine's demilitarization and "denazification," seeking to protect ethnic Russians, prevent Kyiv's NATO membership and to keep it in Russia's "sphere of influence." While he claims Ukraine and the West provoked the invasion, they say just the opposite — that it was an illegal and brazen act of aggression against a country with a democratically elected government and a Jewish president whose relatives were killed in the Holocaust.

Putin laid the foundation for the invasion with a 5,000-word essay in 2021, in which he questioned Ukraine's legitimacy as a nation. That was only the latest chapter in a long obsession with the country and a determination to correct what he believes was a historical mistake of letting it slip from Moscow's orbit. He reached back three centuries, to Peter the Great, to support his quest to reconquer rightful Russian territory.

But rectifying history soon hit modern roadblocks.

"Literally everything that he set out to do has gone disastrously wrong," said British journalist Philip Short, who published his biography, "Putin," last year.

Despite armed interventions in Chechnya, Syria and Georgia, Putin overestimated his military and underestimated Ukrainian resistance and Western support. Russian media try to boost his authority with images of a bare-chested Putin riding a horse, shooting at a military firing range and dressing down government officials on TV, but the war has exposed his shortcomings and the weakness of his military, intelligence services and some economic sectors.

Ukrainian forces have liberated more than half the territory Russia seized. The war has killed tens of thousands on both sides, caused widespread destruction, and induced not only Ukraine but Sweden and Finland to seek NATO membership. It has increased the security threat to Russia and scuttled decades of Russia's integration with the West, bringing international isolation.

Increasingly, Putin seems to be improvising in a conflict much longer and more difficult than he expected. For example, he's threatened to use nuclear weapons, then backed off. The strategy is familiar from his lifelong passion, judo: "You must be flexible. Sometimes you can give way to others if that is the way leading to victory," Putin recounted in flattering 2015-17 interviews with American director Oliver Stone.

In Putin's view, an aggressive West wants to crush Russia. His narrative, along with increasingly repressive measures to stifle domestic dissent, has galvanized patriotic support among many of his countrymen. But it runs up against an inefficient, top-down power structure inherited from the Soviet Union, against the interconnected world's porous borders, and against the sacrifices Russians are suffering firsthand.

AN ERRATIC BUT DETERMINED LEADER

In interviews with The Associated Press, Short, other analysts and a former Kremlin insider describe the 70-year-old Putin as an erratic, weakened leader, rigid and outdated in his thinking, who overreached and is in denial about the difficulties.

They say he seems concerned about waning, though still strong, domestic public opinion — albeit from unreliable polls. Mostly isolated due to COVID-19 concerns and his personal security, Putin speaks with a small set of advisers, but they appear reluctant to provide honest assessments.

Observers see a long, grinding war that Putin is determined to win, with his way out hard to predict.

"It's not Putin that rules Russia. It's circumstances which rule Putin," said Tatiana Stanovaya, senior fellow of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Short believes the Kremlin leader "has painted himself into a corner. ... He will be looking for ways to push ahead, but I don't think he's found them." Giving up is unlikely, Short said, recalling that "his character was always to double down and fight harder."

Fiona Hill, who served in the past three U.S. administrations and is a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, believes Putin wanted to win quickly in Ukraine, install a new president in Kyiv and force it to join Belarus in a Slavic union with Russia. A successor would run Russia, she said, with Putin elevating himself to lead the larger alliance.

But now, according to Stanovaya, "It feels like there is not any hopes that the conflict can be solved any

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other way than militarily. And this is scary.”

WHAT'S AHEAD

Analysts see several scenarios for Putin, depending on battlefield developments. The scenarios, not mutually exclusive, range from what could be his biggest nightmare -- a coup or uprisings like those he saw as a KGB agent in East Germany in 1989, in the USSR in 1991 or Ukraine in 2004 and 2014 -- to winning reelection next year. That would extend what is already the longest rule of any Kremlin leader since Josef Stalin.

Dmitry Oreshkin, a political analyst and professor at Free University in Riga, Latvia, said Putin could revise his goals in Ukraine, declaring he achieved them by establishing a land corridor from Russia to Crimea and taking over the Donetsk and Luhansk regions in the east. Then he could announce, “We punished them. We showed them who is the boss in the house. We have defeated all NATO countries,” Oreshkin added.

But Kyiv has shown no willingness to cede territory, and for Putin to sell this as a victory, Oreshkin believes “he needs to convince himself that he defeated Ukraine. And he understands better than anyone that, in fact, he lost.”

As military setbacks mount, Russians are withdrawing morally and psychologically, and thinking, “Yes, we see that something is wrong in the war, but we do not want to know,” according to Oreshkin.

Such tuning out, along with economic hardships, could blow back on Putin, he said, perhaps this spring, as Russians ask, “You promised victory, so where is it?”

Former Putin speechwriter Abbas Gallyamov said the Russian president doesn’t admit mistakes or defeats, and “desperately needs a victory just to prove the point that he’s a strongman.”

Even some in the military are turning critical, he said.

“When he becomes hated by more than half -- and we’re driving in this direction -- the chances for a coup, elite coup, military coup, will increase,” Gallyamov said, giving a timeline of 2024 “plus a couple of years.”

Stanovaya and Short believe no uprising is imminent.

“Even if people are suffering, and they can be discontented and angry, there is no way to make it political,” Stanovaya said.

Gallyamov sees a way out for Putin if he can gain recognition of “new territories, plus a declaration of NATO that it stops expansion, for example, or Ukrainian introduction into their constitution of their neutral status ... or their declaration that Russian will be the second official language.”

DEATH OR SUCCESSION

Another possibility is Putin dying in office, but CIA Director William Burns is skeptical.

“There are lots of rumors about President Putin’s health, and as far as we can tell, he’s entirely too healthy,” Burns, a former U.S. ambassador to Moscow, told the Aspen Security Forum in Colorado in July.

Short said Putin has established such tight security controls and rival power centers that he’s more likely to suffer “a totally unanticipated heart attack than to be overthrown by the people around him.”

He and Hill believe Putin will eventually look for a successor. Gallyamov lists “technocrats” such as Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyenin and Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin as possibilities. Hill said Dmitry Medvedev, whom Putin tapped as president from 2008-12, “seems to be auditioning for that role again.”

For the moment, Putin remains very much in charge. In his authorized 2000 biography, he noted: “There are always a lot of mistakes made in war. ... You have to take a pragmatic attitude. And you have to keep thinking of victory.”

When a reporter asked him in December if his “special military operation” in Ukraine has been taking too long, Putin replied with a Russian idiom about big goals being achieved incrementally: “The hen pecks grain by grain.”

Israel’s Netanyahu advances judicial changes despite uproar

By TIA GOLDENBERG Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — Israel’s government on Monday was pressing ahead with a contentious plan to overhaul the country’s legal system, despite an unprecedented uproar that has included mass protests,

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warnings from military and business leaders and calls for restraint by the United States.

Thousands of demonstrators were gathering outside the parliament, or Knesset, for a second straight week to rally against the plan as lawmakers prepared to hold an initial vote.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his allies, a collection of ultra-religious and ultranationalist lawmakers, say the plan is meant to fix a system that has given the courts and government legal advisers too much say in how legislation is crafted and decisions are made. Critics say it will upend the country's system of checks and balances and concentrate power in the hands of the prime minister. They also say that Netanyahu, who is on trial for a series of corruption charges, has a conflict of interest.

The standoff has plunged Israel into one of its greatest domestic crises, sharpening a divide between Israelis over the character of their state and the values they believe should guide it.

Monday's vote on part of the legislation is just the first of three readings required for parliamentary approval. While that process is expected to take months, the vote is a sign of the coalition's determination to barrel ahead and seen by many as an act of bad faith.

Israel's figurehead president has urged the government to freeze the legislation and seek a compromise with the opposition. Leaders in the booming tech sector have warned that weakening the judiciary could drive away investors. Tens of thousands of Israelis have been protesting in Tel Aviv and other cities each week.

Last week, some 100,000 people demonstrated outside the Knesset as a committee granted initial approval to the plan. It was the largest protest in the city in years.

On Monday, thousands were rallying outside the Knesset, waving Israeli flags and holding signs reading "saving democracy!"

Earlier in the day, protesters launched a sit-down demonstration at the entrance of the homes of some coalition lawmakers and briefly halted traffic on Tel Aviv's main highway. Hundreds waved Israeli flags in Tel Aviv and also in the northern city of Haifa, holding signs reading "resistance is mandatory."

"We're here to demonstrate for the democracy. Without democracy there's no state of Israel. And we're going to fight till the end," said Marcos Fainstein, a protester in Tel Aviv.

The overhaul has prompted otherwise stoic former security chiefs to speak out, and even warn of civil war. In a sign of the rising emotions, a group of army veterans in their 60s and 70s stole a decommissioned tank from a war memorial site and draped it with Israel's declaration of independence before being stopped by police.

The plan has even sparked rare warnings from the U.S., Israel's chief international ally.

U.S. Ambassador Tom Nides told a podcast over the weekend that Israel should "pump the brakes" on the legislation and seek a consensus on reform that would protect Israel's democratic institutions.

His comments drew angry responses from Netanyahu allies, telling Nides to stay out of Israel's internal affairs.

Speaking to his Cabinet on Sunday, Netanyahu dismissed suggestions that Israel's democracy was under threat. "Israel was and will remain a strong and vibrant democracy," he said.

While Israel has long boasted of its democratic credentials, critics say that claim is tainted by the country's West Bank occupation and the treatment of its own Palestinian minority.

Israel's Palestinian citizens — a minority that may have the most to lose by the legal overhaul — have largely sat out the protests, in part because of discrimination they suffer at home and because of Israel's 55-year military occupation over their Palestinian brethren in the West Bank. Jewish settlers in the West Bank can vote in Israeli elections and are generally protected by Israeli laws, while Palestinians in the same territory are subject to military rule and cannot vote.

Monday's parliamentary votes seek to grant the government more power over who becomes a judge. Today, a selection committee is made up of politicians, judges and lawyers — a system that proponents say promotes consensus.

The new system would give coalition lawmakers control over the appointments. Critics fear that judges will be appointed based on their loyalty to the government or prime minister.

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"This is dramatic," said Yaniv Roznai, co-director of the Rubinstein Center for Constitutional Challenges at Reichman University north of Tel Aviv. "If you take control of the court, then it's all over. You can make any change you want."

A second change would bar the Supreme Court from overturning what are known as "basic laws," pieces of legislation that stand in for a constitution, which Israel does not have. Critics say that legislators will be able to dub any law a basic law, removing judicial oversight over controversial legislation.

Also planned are proposals that would give parliament the power to overturn Supreme Court rulings and control the appointment of government legal advisers. The advisers currently are professional civil servants, and critics say the new system would politicize government ministries.

Critics also fear the overhaul will grant Netanyahu an escape route from his legal woes. Netanyahu denies wrongdoing and says he is the victim of a biased judicial system on a witch hunt against him.

Israel's attorney general has barred Netanyahu from any involvement in the overhaul, saying his legal troubles create a conflict of interest. Instead, his justice minister, a close confidant, is leading the charge. On Sunday, Netanyahu called the restrictions on him "patently ridiculous."

Recent polls show that most Israelis, including many Netanyahu supporters, support halting the legislation and moving forward through consensus.

Record 6,542 guns intercepted at US airport security in '22

By REBECCA SANTANA Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — The woman flying out of Philadelphia's airport last year remembered to pack snacks, prescription medicine and a cellphone in her handbag. But what was more important was what she forgot to unpack: a loaded .380-caliber handgun in a black holster.

The weapon was one of the 6,542 guns the Transportation Security Administration intercepted last year at airport checkpoints across the country. The number — roughly 18 per day — was an all-time high for guns intercepted at U.S. airports, and is sparking concern at a time when more Americans are armed.

"What we see in our checkpoints really reflects what we're seeing in society, and in society there are more people carrying firearms nowadays," TSA administrator David Pekoske said.

With the exception of pandemic-disrupted 2020, the number of weapons intercepted at airport checkpoints has climbed every year since 2010. Experts don't think this is an epidemic of would-be hijackers — nearly everyone caught claims to have forgotten they had a gun with them — but they emphasize the danger even one gun can pose in the wrong hands on a plane or at a checkpoint.

Guns have been intercepted literally from Burbank, California, to Bangor, Maine. But it tends to happen more at bigger airports in areas with laws more friendly to carrying a gun, Pekoske said. The top 10 list for gun interceptions in 2022 includes Dallas, Austin and Houston in Texas; three airports in Florida; Nashville, Tennessee; Atlanta; Phoenix; and Denver.

Pekoske isn't sure the "I forgot" excuse is always true or whether it's a natural reaction to getting caught. Regardless, he said, it's a problem that must stop.

When TSA staffers see what they believe to be a weapon on the X-ray machine, they usually stop the belt so the bag stays inside the machine and the passenger can't get to it. Then they call in local police.

Repercussions vary depending on local and state laws. The person may be arrested and have the gun confiscated. But sometimes they're allowed to give the gun to a companion not flying with them and continue on their way. Unloaded guns can also be placed in checked bags assuming they follow proper procedures. The woman in Philadelphia saw her gun confiscated and was slated to be fined.

Those federal fines are the TSA's tool to punish those who bring a gun to a checkpoint. Last year TSA raised the maximum fine to \$14,950 as a deterrent. Passengers also lose their PreCheck status — it allows them to bypass some types of screening — for five years. It used to be three years, but about a year ago the agency increased the time and changed the rules. Passengers may also miss their flight as well as lose their gun. If federal officials can prove the person intended to bring the gun past the checkpoint into what's called the airport's sterile area, it's a federal offense.

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Retired TSA official Keith Jeffries said gun interceptions can also slow other passengers in line.

"It's disruptive no matter what," Jeffries said. "It's a dangerous, prohibited item and, let's face it, you should know where your gun is at, for crying out loud."

Experts and officials say the rise in gun interceptions simply reflects that more Americans are carrying guns.

The National Shooting Sports Foundation, an industry trade group, tracks FBI data about background checks completed for a firearm sale. The numbers were a little over 7 million in 2000 and about 16.4 million last year. They went even higher during the coronavirus pandemic.

For the TSA officers searching for prohibited items, it can be jarring.

In Atlanta, Janecia Howard was monitoring the X-ray machine when she realized she was looking at a gun in a passenger's laptop bag. She immediately flagged it as a "high-threat" item and police were notified.

Howard said it felt like her heart dropped, and she was worried the passenger might try to get the gun. It turns out the passenger was a very apologetic businessman who said he simply forgot. Howard says she understands travel can be stressful but that people have to take care when they're getting ready for a flight.

"You have to be alert and pay attention," she said. "It's your property."

Atlanta's airport, one of the world's busiest with roughly 85,000 people going through checkpoints on a busy day, had the most guns intercepted in 2022 — 448 — but that number was actually lower than the year before. Robert Spinden, the TSA's top official in Atlanta, says the agency and the airport made a big effort in 2021 to try to address the large number of guns being intercepted at checkpoints.

An incident in November 2021 reinforced the need for their efforts. A TSA officer noticed a suspected gun in a passenger's bag. When the officer opened the suitcase the man reached for the gun, and it went off. People ran for the exits, and the airport was shut down for 2 1/2 hours, the airport's general manager Balram Bheodari said during a congressional hearing last year.

Officials put in new signage to catch the attention of gun owners. A hologram over a checkpoint shows the image of a revolving blue gun with a red circle over the gun with a line through it. Numerous 70-inch television screens flash rotating messages that guns are not allowed.

"There's signage all over the airport. There is announcements, holograms, TVs. There's quite a bit of information that is sort of flashing before your eyes to just try to remind you as a last ditch effort that if you do own a firearm, do you know where it's at?" Spinden said.

Miami's airport also worked to get gunowners' attention. The airport's director told Congress last year that after setting a gun interception record in 2021 they installed high-visibility signage and worked with airlines to warn passengers. He said the number of firearms intercepted declined sharply.

Pekoske said signage is only part of the solution. Travelers face a barrage of signs or announcements already and don't always pay attention. He also supports gradually raising penalties to grab people's attention.

But Aidan Johnston, from the gun advocacy group Gun Owners of America, said he'd like to see the fines lessened, saying they're not a deterrent. While he'd like to see more education for new gun owners, he also doesn't think of this as a "major heinous crime."

"These are not bad people that are in dire need of punishment," he said. "These are people who made a mistake."

Officials believe they're catching the vast majority, but with 730 million passengers screened last year even a miniscule percentage getting through is a concern.

Last month, musician Cliff Waddell was traveling from Nashville, Tennessee, to Raleigh, North Carolina, when he was stopped at the checkpoint. A TSA officer had seen a gun in his bag. Waddell was so shocked he initially said it couldn't be his because he'd just flown the day before with the same bag. It turned out the gun had been in his bag but missed at the screening. TSA acknowledged the miss, and Pekoske says they're investigating.

When trying to figure out how the gun he keeps locked in his glove compartment got in his bookbag,

Waddell realized he'd taken it out when he took the vehicle in for repairs. Waddell said he recognizes it's his responsibility to know where his firearm is but worries about how TSA could have missed something so significant.

"That was a shock to me," he said.

Why China's stand on Russia and Ukraine is raising concerns

BEIJING (AP) — Nearly one year after Russia invaded Ukraine, new questions are rising over China's potential willingness to offer military aid to Moscow in the increasingly drawn-out conflict.

In an interview that aired Sunday, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said American intelligence suggests China is considering providing arms and ammunition to Russia, an involvement in the Kremlin's war effort that he said would be a "serious problem."

China has refused to criticize Russia for its actions or even to call it an invasion in deference to Moscow. At the same time, it insists that the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations must be upheld.

The question now is whether China is willing to convert that rhetorical backing into material support.

On Monday, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin accused the United States of "fanning flames and stoking confrontations" by providing Ukraine with defensive weapons, and said Beijing would "never accept (U.S.) finger-pointing and even coercion and pressure on China-Russia relations."

Here's a look at where China stands on the conflict.

DOES CHINA BACK RUSSIA IN ITS WAR ON UKRAINE?

China has tried to walk a fine — and often contradictory — line on the Russian invasion.

China says Russia was provoked into taking action by NATO's eastward expansion. Just weeks before the Feb. 24, 2022, invasion, Chinese President Xi Jinping hosted Russian President Vladimir Putin in Beijing for the opening of the Winter Olympics, at which time the sides issued a joint statement pledging their commitment to a "no limits" friendship. China has since ignored Western criticism and reaffirmed that pledge.

But China has yet to confirm the visit Putin has said he expects from Xi this spring.

China is "trying to have it both ways," Blinken said Sunday on NBC. "Publicly, they present themselves as a country striving for peace in Ukraine, but privately, as I said, we've seen already over these past months the provision of non-lethal assistance that does go directly to aiding and abetting Russia's war effort."

HAS CHINA PROVIDED MATERIAL SUPPORT TO RUSSIA?

So far, China's support for Russia has been rhetorical and political, with Beijing helping prevent efforts to condemn Moscow at the United Nations.

Blinken, at a security conference in Munich, Germany, said the U.S. has long been concerned that China would provide weapons to Russia and that "we have information that gives us concern that they are considering providing lethal support to Russia in the war against Ukraine." That came a day after Blinken held talks with Wang Yi, the Chinese Communist Party's most senior foreign policy official, in a meeting that offered little sign of a reduction in tensions or progress on the Ukraine issue.

"It was important for me to share very clearly with Wang Yi that this would be a serious problem," Blinken said, referring to potential military support for Russia.

The U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, also expressed her concern about any effort by the Chinese to arm Russia, saying "that would be a red line."

Russian and Chinese forces have held joint military drills since Russia invaded Ukraine a year ago, most recently sending ships to take part in exercises with the South African navy in a key shipping lane off the South African coast.

WHAT HAS CHINA SAID ON THE MATTER?

"It is the U.S. who kept providing weapons to the battlefield, not China," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said Monday. "The principle that China follows on the Ukraine issue can be simply

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put as promoting peace talks.”

After the meeting between Wang Yi and Blinken, China’s Foreign Ministry issued a statement that it has always played a constructive role in the Ukraine conflict by adhering to principles, encouraging peace and promoting talks.

The ministry said the China-Russia partnership “is established on the basis of non-alignment, non-confrontation, and non-targeting of third parties,” and that the U.S. was adding “fuel to the fire to take advantage of the opportunity to make profits.”

Beijing says it has continued a normal trade relationship with Russia, including purchases of oil and gas, as have other countries such as India. That trade is seen as throwing an economic lifeline to Moscow, but there have been no documented cases of China providing direct aid to the Russian military along the lines of the inexpensive military drones that Iran sells to Moscow.

WHAT COULD HAPPEN IF CHINA AIDS RUSSIA?

There would be “real consequences ... were China to provide lethal assistance to Russia” or help Moscow evade sanctions in a “systematic way,” Blinken said Monday in the Turkey capital, Ankara. He did not specify what measures Washington would take in response to Chinese military support for Russia, but said other countries would join the U.S. with similar actions.

Efforts to put a floor under ties that have deteriorated to their lowest level in decades have so far been unsuccessful. The U.S. has sought to limit Chinese access to the latest microprocessors and manufacturing equipment, and has continued to challenge Chinese territorial claims in the South China Sea.

For China, the most sensitive issue is U.S. support for Taiwan, the self-governing island democracy that Beijing considers its own territory to be conquered by military force if deemed necessary. Taiwan is a major customer for U.S. defensive arms and has hosted a growing number of prominent American elected officials, enraging Beijing.

Meanwhile, U.S. Congress members have called for the banning of TikTok and other Chinese-owned social media platforms, as well as increased sanctions on Chinese firms backed by the Communist Party, which wields ultimate control over the Chinese economy and suppresses independent media and political opposition voices.

Heavy rains leave 36 dead in Brazil, cities cancel Carnival

By MAURICIO SAVARESE Associated Press

SAO PAULO (AP) — Heavy rain caused flooding and landslides that have killed 36 people in Brazil’s north Sao Paulo state, officials said Sunday, and the fatalities could rise.

Sao Paulo state government said in a statement that 35 died in the city of Sao Sebastiao and a 7-year-old girl was killed in neighboring Ubatuba.

The cities of Sao Sebastiao, Ubatuba, Ilhabela and Bertioga, some of the hardest hit and now under state of calamity, canceled their Carnival festivities as rescue teams struggle to find missing, injured and feared dead in the rubble.

“Our rescue teams are not managing to get to several locations; it is a chaotic situation,” said Felipe Augusto, the mayor of Sao Sebastiao. Later, he added there are dozens of people missing and that 50 houses collapsed in the city due to the landslides.

Augusto posted on social media several videos of widespread destruction in his city, including one of a baby being rescued by locals lined up on a flooded street.

Brazil’s President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva said on Twitter he will visit the region Monday.

Sao Paulo state government said in a statement that precipitation in the region has surpassed 600 millimeters (23.6 inches) in one day, one of the highest amounts ever in Brazil in such a short period.

Bertioga alone had 687 millimeters during that period, the state government said.

Gov. Tarcisio de Freitas said in a statement he requested support from the army, which sent two airplanes and rescue teams to the region.

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TV footage showed houses flooded with only the roof visible. Residents are using small boats to carry items and people to higher positions. A road that connects Rio de Janeiro to the port city of Santos was blocked by landslides and floodwaters.

The northern coast of Sao Paulo state is a frequent Carnival destination for wealthy tourists who prefer to stay away from massive street parties in big cities.

Trump absent as Iowa 2024 GOP caucus train begins to roll

By THOMAS BEAUMONT Associated Press

CEDAR RAPIDS, Iowa (AP) — Nikki Haley is swinging through Iowa this week fresh off announcing her presidential campaign. Her fellow South Carolinian Republican, Sen. Tim Scott, will also be here as he decides his political future. And former Vice President Mike Pence was just in the state courting influential evangelical Christian activists.

After a slow start, Republican presidential prospects are streaming into the leadoff presidential caucus state. Notably absent from the lineup, at least for now, is former President Donald Trump.

Few of the White House hopefuls face the lofty expectations in Iowa that Trump does. He finished a competitive second to devout social conservative Ted Cruz in 2016, and went on to carry the state twice, by healthy margins, as the Republican presidential nominee in the 2016 and 2020 elections.

"It is genuinely impossible for this guy to try to manage these expectations. They are enormous. They are self-made," said Luke Martz, a veteran Iowa Republican strategist who helped lead Mitt Romney's 2012 Iowa caucus campaign. "I don't see how anyone who is saying 'I'm the guy' can come in and even get even a second-place finish."

Yet, in the three months since he announced his bid for a comeback, Trump has not set foot in Iowa, the first place his claim of party dominance will be tested early next year.

To be sure, Trump has a campaign presence in Iowa. Alex Latcham, who is part of Trump's national team but is based in the state, has been working on landing a caucus campaign director. But Trump held a kickoff rally on Jan. 28 in South Carolina, where his 2016 primary victory sealed his status as GOP frontrunner. And he squeezed in a speaking spot earlier that day at the annual state GOP meeting in New Hampshire, where he also won the first-in-the-nation primary seven years ago.

Though the caucuses remain nearly a year off, they remain the first event on the calendar, and some Iowa GOP activists have taken notice of Trump's absence.

"I found that quite interesting," Gloria Mazza, chairwoman of the Polk County GOP, said of Trump's New Hampshire and South Carolina stops. "Because Iowa is first in the nation, doesn't everybody come here first?"

Meanwhile, others are making inroads.

Though Pence is not yet a candidate, his advocacy group Advancing American Values last week launched a campaign to organize opposition to school policies like one in an eastern Iowa district that has become a flashpoint among conservatives.

Pence was in Cedar Rapids on Wednesday rallying opponents of a policy by the nearby Linn-Mar Community School District that's at issue in a federal lawsuit. The school board last year enacted a measure allowing transgender students to request a gender support plan to begin socially transitioning at school without the permission of their parents.

The issue, an early focus of 2024 Republican presidential prospects, is particularly contentious among Christian conservatives, with whom Pence routinely says he identifies. And at Wednesday's event at a pizza restaurant — it had the feel of an early caucus campaign stop — Pence illustrated its traction.

"We don't co-parent with government," Pence told a cheering audience of more than 100. "We trust parents to protect their children and no one will ever protect America's children better than their moms and dads."

Haley has rallies planned in the Des Moines and Cedar Rapids areas on Monday and Tuesday. Meanwhile, Scott is speaking an event at Drake University on Wednesday, part of what aides call a national listen-

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ing tour aimed at informing his plans, before addressing the annual Polk County Republican fundraiser in suburban Des Moines that evening.

Quietly making inroads is former Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson, who visited Iowa in January, and met last week with legislative Republicans in the Capitol in Des Moines and Republican activists in western Iowa.

Though several would-be candidates including Trump were in Iowa last year campaigning for midterm candidates, these first impressions at the outset of the GOP presidential primary are important. That's especially true as many in the GOP wait to see whether Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis proceeds with a White House bid.

But as the field of candidates grows in the coming months, Trump still retains a core of Republican support that could be hard to overcome.

In October, 57% of Iowa Republicans said they hoped Trump decided to run in 2024, according to a Des Moines Register/Mediacom Iowa Poll, while 33% said they hoped he would not and 10% said they were not sure.

"Of course, there's a contingent that will support him regardless," Iowa Republican national committee-man Steve Scheffler said. "But there's an increasing number of people who want to kick the tires before making a decision. That's what gives others an open door."

Tatum scores All-Star record 55, Team Giannis wins 184-175

By TIM REYNOLDS AP Basketball Writer

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — Jayson Tatum put on a record-setting show, and made Giannis Antetokounmpo look like a genius.

Tatum scored an All-Star Game-record 55 points on his way to winning MVP honors, and Team Giannis ended LeBron James' hold on All-Star captain supremacy by beating Team LeBron 184-175 in the NBA's annual showcase exhibition on Sunday night.

Tatum had 27 points in the third quarter, another All-Star Game record for any period. He was the first pick by Antetokounmpo in the starters' portion of the All-Star draft, and in the end, that pick proved to be the right one.

And the MVP award Tatum was given is named for Kobe Bryant, one of his heroes.

"It means the world," Tatum said. "You think of all the legends and great players that have played this game, and in all honesty, records are made to be broken. I'll hold it for as long as I can, but I'm certain someone will come along in a couple years and try to break it."

Tatum broke Anthony Davis' All-Star record of 52 points. He was 22 of 31 from the floor, plus had 10 rebounds and six assists.

It was James' first loss in six times as captain. Antetokounmpo improved to 1-2 in his All-Star captaincies, and became the first captain to hoist a new trophy presented to the winners of the All-Star Game.

"Winner, winner, chicken dinner," Antetokounmpo said.

Later, with a more serious tone, Antetokounmpo said he had a reason for choosing Tatum.

"I knew he would take it serious. It was a no-brainer," he said.

Donovan Mitchell added 40 for Team Giannis, which got 26 points from Damian Lillard — including the game-winner to push his team past the target score.

Jaylen Brown scored 35 points and had 14 rebounds for Team LeBron, while Kyrie Irving had 32 points and 15 assists and Joel Embiid finished with 32 points.

Brown and Tatum — Boston teammates — were reveling in a back-and-forth duel during a stretch of the second half.

"It was a normal day for us," Tatum said. "Just millions of people watching."

Lillard, the winner of the 3-point contest on All-Star Saturday Night, made eight 3s — including a half-court pullup in the third quarter.

"That was the worst basketball game I've ever seen," Team LeBron coach Michael Malone said, clearly poking fun at the defense-optional event.

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Winning coach Joe Mazzulla of Team Giannis said he had a very simple strategy.

"Stay out of the way, enjoy it, have fun, allow the guys to just be themselves," Mazzulla said. "I think it's important, especially in this league, that guys are just able to be themselves."

The league had a ceremony before the second half to pay tribute to the three leading scorers in NBA history: No. 3 Karl Malone, No. 2 Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and James, now the game's career leader after he passed Abdul-Jabbar earlier this month.

Malone and Abdul-Jabbar were brought to the stage, and then Dwyane Wade — James' former teammate in Miami and now a part-owner of the Jazz — introduced James to bring him onto the platform.

"We've all been witnesses," Wade said. "No matter the challenge, no matter the noise, he was relentless."

With the number 38,388 displayed behind him, James then raised his hand to thank the fans for their ovation, hugged Abdul-Jabbar and Malone. He didn't return to the game, his night ending with a right hand contusion.

He finished with 13 points, and said a chasedown block in the first half led to him getting a finger caught in the rim.

"Precautionary reasons," James said.

James played a half. The game's other captain didn't play a half-minute.

Antetokounmpo drafted his team before the game, went through warmups (such as they were) and started the game as planned.

But his right wrist was wrapped, and that was an ominous sign. The injury kept him out of All-Star Saturday's skills event, limited him to 20 seconds in this one. He got an uncontested dunk to open the game, then took a foul and headed to the bench.

"Whatever I have, I'm going to give," Antetokounmpo said. "That's who I am. That's never going to change."

As in past years, the teams played for charity, with Team LeBron raising money for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Utah and Team Giannis for Raise the Future, which connects youth waiting in foster care with stable adults. Each team started with \$150,000, with the first three quarters worth another \$100,000 apiece and the All-Star Game winner getting another \$150,000.

The teams were tied at 46-46 in the first quarter, and Team Giannis took the second quarter 53-46. Team Giannis also won the third quarter 59-49, and the cumulative score to that point — 158-141, Team Giannis — meant 182 would be the score to reach in the untimed fourth quarter with a target-score ending.

Team Giannis won \$550,000 for its charity, and Team LeBron won \$200,000. And Tatum, just as he vowed he would at his first All-Star Game in 2020 — when the award was named for Bryant — won the trophy that he's wanted for a while.

"Icing on the cake," Tatum said.

TIP-INS

Team Giannis: Antetokounmpo's two points kept him the all-time All-Star scoring average leader. He's now averaging 25.1 points in All-Star Games, just ahead of Kevin Durant (25.0). Without that basket, he'd average 24.9. ... Jrue Holiday took Antetokounmpo's spot in the starting lineup for the second half.

Team LeBron: Denver's Nikola Jokic, the two-time reigning MVP, became the first player to start an All-Star Game on his birthday; he turned 28 on Sunday. The only other player to appear in an All-Star Game on his birthday, the NBA said, was Larry Nance Sr. in 1989. ... Halftime lasted 42 minutes. ... Paul George started in place of James for the second half.

214 COUNTRIES

Last year's All-Star Game was broadcast in 215 countries; this year, it was shown in 214 countries. The omission was Russia. The NBA isn't showing its games in Russia and hasn't for nearly a year. The league suspended its business activities with Russia in March 2022, just days after that country invaded Ukraine.

REFEREES

The officiating crew of John Goble, Mark Lindsay and Michael Smith had the game.

UP NEXT

Indianapolis will play host to the next NBA All-Star weekend, set for Feb. 16-18, 2024. The city was sup-

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posed to have the 2021 game, but it was moved to Atlanta and considerably scaled down because of the pandemic.

Ricky Stenhouse Jr. wins longest Daytona 500 in history

By JENNA FRYER AP Auto Racing Writer

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. (AP) — Ricky Stenhouse Jr. has had a rollercoaster career in which he had to fight to keep a job, lost his seat at a NASCAR powerhouse team and opened his 14th season mired in a five-year losing streak.

To say this Daytona 500 was a milestone race was an understatement — for Stenhouse and for NASCAR.

Stenhouse won the Daytona 500 in double overtime and under caution on Sunday in the longest running of “The Great American Race.” The two overtimes pushed the 65th running of the race to a record 212 laps — a dozen laps beyond the scheduled distance and a whopping 530 miles.

It provided anxious moments before a landmark celebration: The first Daytona 500-winning team co-owned by a Black man and a woman.

Stenhouse’s win for JTG Daugherty Racing was the third of his career. JTG is the first single-car team to win the Daytona 500 since The Wood Brothers Racing did it with Trevor Bayne in 2011.

The team is owned by Tad and Jodi Geschickter along with former NBA player Brad Daugherty.

Daugherty, who left the track earlier Sunday with an eye irritation, is the first Black car owner to win the race and Jodi Geschickter joined Teresa Earnhardt as female car owners to win the Daytona 500. Earnhardt ran Dale Earnhardt Inc. when Michael Waltrip and Dale Earnhardt Jr. won the Daytona 500 in 2003 and 2004.

To get to victory lane Sunday, JTG stuck with Stenhouse and even reunited him this season with the crew chief who led him to a pair of Xfinity Series titles years ago.

Mike Kelly’s biggest task was convincing Stenhouse that he can indeed win races. So ahead of the Daytona 500, he taped a note inside the Chevrolet. The message? The team believes in the driver.

“When I woke up today I told myself that I was going to do something that I used to do for Ricky when we had tough days,” Kelly said. “I just wrote him a note that only he would see. It was on top of the roll bar in front of him, and it just said, ‘We believe.’ That’s been our motto the whole offseason — that we believe.

“We’re trying to get people to believe in Ricky Stenhouse Jr. again.”

Stenhouse’s only other victories came in 2017, at Talladega and the summer race at Daytona.

Now the 35-year-old from Olive Branch, Mississippi, has a repeat win at Daytona in NASCAR’s biggest race of the season.

“I think this whole offseason Mike just preached how much we all believed in each other. They left me a note in the car that said they believe in me and to go get the job done,” Stenhouse said. “Man, this is unbelievable. This was the site of my last win back in 2017. We’ve worked really hard. We had a couple shots last year to get a win and fell short.

“It was a tough season, but man, we got it done, Daytona 500.”

Kyle Larson was collected in the race-ending crash after he jumped out of line too early in an attempt to win the race. His disappointment was alleviated by Stenhouse’s victory.

“Happy that Ricky won. I’m super happy. That’s all I could think about after I crashed, waiting to hear that he won,” Larson said. “He’s one of my best friends, so I was like yelling into my helmet when I helped push him to the lead there. I was hoping it was going to stay green so it would have been me or him win.

“I can’t wait to go get changed and go give him a big hug because he is one of my great buddies.”

Reigning Cup champion Joey Logano finished second in a Ford for Team Penske, which won the race last year with Austin Cindric.

“Second is the worst, man,” Logano said. “Congratulations to Ricky. There’s nothing like winning the Daytona 500. That’s why it stings so much finishing second.”

Christopher Bell was third in a Toyota for Joe Gibbs Racing and followed by Chris Buescher in a Ford for

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RFK Racing and pole-sitter Alex Bowman of Hendrick Motorsports in a Chevrolet. It marked the first time the pole-sitter has finished in the top five since Bill Elliott in 2001.

AJ Allmendinger was sixth for Kaulig Racing, Daniel Suarez seventh for Trackhouse Racing, and Ryan Blaney eighth for Team Penske. Ross Chastain of Trackhouse and Riley Herbst of Rick Ware Racing rounded out the top 10.

Action sports star Travis Pastrana finished 11th in his Daytona 500 debut, and Kevin Harvick was 12th in his final Daytona 500. Harvick is retiring at the end of the year.

Kyle Busch dropped to 0 for 18 in the Daytona 500, but contended for his new Richard Childress Racing team. He was the leader ahead of teammate Austin Dillon with three laps remaining in regulation when a spin by Daniel Suarez brought out the caution and sent the race to overtime.

"Back in 1998, that would be the win, boys," Busch radioed his team in deliberate reference to how the late Dale Earnhardt won his only Daytona 500. There was no overtime then and Earnhardt won under caution.

Busch wound up 19th after the race-ending crash in second overtime.

"I think this is the first time I led lap 200, so I wish it was 1998 rules. But, no, it's just par for the course, just used to it and come down here every year to just find out when and where I'm going to crash and what lap I come out of the care center," Busch said. "Who won? I don't even know who lucked into it."

Busch was told Stenhouse was the victor.

"There you have it," he replied.

Seven-time NASCAR champion Jimmie Johnson made his return to the series and ran inside the top 15 for most of the race. He was collected in one of the crashes in overtime and finished 31st. Johnson has returned from two years racing in the IndyCar Series as part owner of Legacy Motor Club and he plans to enter a handful of races.

Brad Keselowski led a race-high 42 laps, but finished 22nd. He declined to speak to reporters after dropping to 0 for 14 in a race he desperately wants to win.

NEXT UP

The Cup Series races at Auto Club Speedway in Fontana, California, next Sunday in the final race in the track's current configuration. It will be renovated into a short track after the race — a project that will prevent the track from hosting any racing in 2024. Kyle Larson won last year's race.

Mexican musician finds refuge in saxophone after acid attack

By MARÍA VERZA Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — María Elena Ríos has conflicting feelings about her saxophone: She once blamed the instrument for bringing her to the brink of death — but it also has been her salvation.

Ríos, 29, thought her career as a musician and her devotion to her saxophone were what led her former boyfriend — an influential politician — to hire the men who splashed acid onto her face and body, disfiguring her. Later, she learned he simply couldn't accept that she had broken off their relationship.

Some of the attackers and the ex-boyfriend are in jail, but Ríos still had to come to terms with her instrument. Her love of the saxophone, in the end, is helping heal the psychological scars left by the terrifying attack.

"We are reconciling, little by little," Ríos said of the musical instrument. "I hated it, because I thought it was responsible" for the 2019 attack in Mexico's southern state of Oaxaca. She's performed live since then, but still wears a mask covering her lower face.

"It bothered my attacker a lot that I was a musician," Ríos recounts, "because he said we musicians were vagrants, poverty stricken, that we just took drugs and that when I went to concerts I probably participated in orgies."

The ex-politician who allegedly ordered the attack is being held in jail while awaiting trial, as are two other men, but another remains at large.

Meanwhile, Ríos has joined a movement calling for greater punishments for acid attacks and says the

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saxophone is her "sword" in that battle on behalf of victims.

Mexico City legislators have proposed a bill bearing her nickname, "Malena," which would classify acid attacks as a distinct, serious crime equivalent to attempted femicide. Currently they are treated as simple assault or bodily injury.

Acid attacks are most common in South Asia, but also have been documented in many other parts of the world, including Latin America.

The Carmen Sánchez Foundation, started in 2021 to highlight the issue in Mexico, says government health data from 2022 suggests more than 100 women were attacked by chemicals or some kind of corrosive agent, though only 28 were reported to authorities.

Ríos remembers having to choose, at age 9, between playing soccer and joining one of the musical bands that are a popular community activity in the rural villages in Oaxaca.

"I am not her anymore. I am not the beautiful young woman who played the saxophone anymore," said Ríos. "Today I can say I have been forced to become a defender of my own rights, and a defender of the rights of other fellow women survivors."

She was hospitalized for five months after the attack, and still recalls the sadness in her parents' eyes when she awoke in hospital.

She now attends musical classes in Mexico City, where she has taken refuge since the attack. The federal government has provided her with bodyguards because her attacker was wealthy and influential.

Ríos said she and her family were harassed before the attack, when she tried to break off the relationship. She says the harassment continues, and that she lives in constant fear for her life.

The man accused of ordering the attack, Juan Manuel Vera Carrizal, was a local legislator and businessman. He has declared himself innocent and his lawyers deny he had any involvement.

Even though he was jailed and expelled from his political party in 2020, Ríos says he still has influence.

In January he was almost released to house arrest after a judge tried to reclassify the crime, applying rules for a lesser offense. But because her case has gained national attention, the attempt failed.

Music is now a refuge for Ríos. "When I begin to assemble my saxophone, I feel like I am putting myself together," she says.

Last year she was invited to play on stage for the first time after the attack. It was at the annual Vive Latino music festival in Mexico City with the rock group Maldita Vecindad.

She says it made her feel "eternal."

Richard Belzer, stand-up comic and TV detective, dies at 78

By JAKE COYLE AP Film Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Richard Belzer, the longtime stand-up comedian who became one of TV's most indelible detectives as John Munch in "Homicide: Life on the Street" and "Law & Order: SVU," has died. He was 78.

Belzer died Sunday at his home in Beaulieu-sur-Mer, in southern France, his longtime friend Bill Scheft said. Scheft, a writer who had been working on a documentary about Belzer, said there was no known cause of death, but that Belzer had been dealing with circulatory and respiratory issues. The actor Henry Winkler, Belzer's cousin, tweeted, "Rest in peace Richard."

For more than two decades and across 10 series — even including appearances on "30 Rock" and "Arrested Development" — Belzer played the wise-cracking, acerbic homicide detective prone to conspiracy theories. Belzer first played Munch on a 1993 episode of "Homicide" and last played him in 2016 on "Law & Order: SVU."

Belzer never auditioned for the role. After hearing him on "The Howard Stern Show," executive producer Barry Levinson brought the comedian in to read for the part.

"I would never be a detective. But if I were, that's how I'd be," Belzer once said. "They write to all my paranoia and anti-establishment dissidence and conspiracy theories. So it's been a lot of fun for me. A dream, really."

From that unlikely beginning, Belzer's Munch would become one of television's longest-running characters

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and a sunglasses-wearing presence on the small screen for more than two decades. In 2008, Belzer published the novel "I Am Not a Cop!" with Michael Ian Black. He also helped write several books on conspiracy theories, about things like President John F. Kennedy's assassination and Malaysia Airlines Flight 370.

"He made me laugh a billion times," his longtime friend and fellow stand-up Richard Lewis said Sunday on Twitter.

Born in Bridgeport, Connecticut, Belzer was drawn to comedy, he said, during an abusive childhood in which his mother would beat him and his older brother, Len. He would do impressions of his childhood idol, Jerry Lewis. "My kitchen was the toughest room I ever worked," Belzer told People magazine in 1993.

After being expelled from Dean Junior College in Massachusetts, Belzer embarked on a life of stand-up in New York in 1972. At Catch a Rising Star, Belzer became a regular performer and an emcee. He made his big-screen debut in Ken Shapiro's 1974 film "The Groove Tube," a TV satire co-starring Chevy Chase, a film that grew out of the comedy group Channel One that Belzer was a part of.

Before "Saturday Night Live" changed the comedy scene in New York, Belzer performed with John Belushi, Gilda Radner, Bill Murray and others on the National Lampoon Radio Hour. In 1975, he became the warm-up comic for the newly launched "SNL." While many cast members quickly became famous, Belzer's roles were mostly smaller cameos. He later said "SNL" creator Lorne Michaels reneged on a promise to work him into the show.

But Belzer became one of the era's top stand-ups. He was known especially for his biting, cynical attitude and his witty, sometime combative banter with the audience. As one of the most influential comedians of the '70s, Belzer was a master of crowd work.

"My style evolved from dealing with drunken people at twelve, one, two in the morning and trying to be like an alchemist and get the lead of their lives and turn it into golden jokes," Belzer told Terry Gross on "Fresh Air."

Belzer would later write an irreverent self-help book titled "How to Be a Stand-Up Comic" with advice on things like how to apologize to Frank Sinatra when you made fun of him onstage or how to deal with hecklers. One of his favorite lines was: "I have a microphone. You have a beer. God has a plan and you're not in on it."

Belzer often played a stand-up comic in film, including in 1980s' "Fame" and 1983's "Scarface." He had small roles here and there, including in "Night Shift" in 1982, and "Fletch Lives" in 1989. But Munch would change Belzer's career.

As "Homicide" co-creator Tom Fontana said, "Munch was the spice in these dishes," Belzer told the AV Club. "Munch was based on a real guy in Baltimore who was a star detective, in a way. He would come onto grisly murder scenes, start doing one-liners, because someone had to break the tension. So Munch served a very important function. Not only was he a dissident who said what was on his mind, he kind of had the gallows humor that's needed in a homicide squad."

When "Homicide" wrapped in early 1999, Munch called Dick Wolf to see if the character could join another NBC series, "Law & Order," where Munch had popped up in a few previous episodes. Wolf already had his leads for "Law & Order," but he wanted Belzer to star in a spinoff. That fall, "Law & Order: SVU" premiered, with Belzer starring alongside Mariska Hargitay and Christopher Meloni in a storyline written as though Munch had transferred from Baltimore to New York.

"Richard Belzer's Detective John Munch is one of television's iconic characters," Wolf said in a statement. "I first worked with Richard on the 'Law & Order'/'Homicide' crossover and loved the character so much," Wolf said. "I wanted to make him one of the original characters on 'SVU.' The rest is history. Richard brought humor and joy into all our lives, was the consummate professional and we will all miss him very much."

Belzer is survived by his third wife, the actress Harlee McBride, whom he married in 1985. For the past 20 years, they lived mostly in France, in homes he purchased partially from the proceeds of a lawsuit with Hulk Hogan. In 1985, Belzer had Hogan as a guest on his cable TV talk show "Hot Properties" to perform a chin-lock on him. Belzer passed out, hit his head and sued Hogan for \$5 million. They settled out of court. ____

This story has been corrected to reflect that Belzer died in Beaulieu-sur-Mer, France, not Bozouls, as

Scheft originally told The Hollywood Reporter.

'All Quiet' wins 7 BAFTAs, including best film, at UK awards

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Antiwar German movie "All Quiet on the Western Front" won seven prizes, including best picture, at the British Academy Film Awards on Sunday, building the somber drama's momentum as awards season rolls toward its climax at next month's Oscars.

Irish tragicomedy "The Banshees of Inisherin" and rock biopic "Elvis" took four prizes each.

"All Quiet," a visceral depiction of life and death in the World War I trenches based on Erich Maria Remarque's classic novel, won Edward Berger the best director award. Its other trophies included adapted screenplay, cinematography, best score, best sound and best film not in English.

Austin Butler was a surprise best actor winner for "Elvis." Baz Luhrmann's flamboyant musical also won trophies for casting, costume design and hair and makeup. Cate Blanchett won the best actress prize for orchestral drama "Tár."

Martin McDonagh's "Banshees," the bleakly comic story of a friendship gone sour, was named best British film.

"Best what award?" joked McDonagh of the film, which was shot in Ireland with a largely Irish cast and crew. It has British funding, and McDonagh was born in Britain to Irish parents.

"Banshees" also won for McDonagh's original screenplay, and awards for Kerry Condon as best supporting actress and Barry Keoghan for best supporting actor.

The prizes — officially the EE BAFTA Film Awards — are Britain's equivalent of Hollywood's Academy Awards and will be watched closely for hints of who may win at the Oscars on March 12.

Madcap metaverse romp "Everything Everywhere All at Once," the Academy Awards front-runner, was the night's big loser, winning just one prize from its 10 BAFTA nominations, for editing.

Actor Richard E. Grant was a suave and self-deprecating host — with support from TV presenter Alison Hammond — for the ceremony at London's Royal Festival Hall, where the U.K.'s movie academy heralded its strides to become more diverse but said there was more to be done.

Grant joked in his opening monologue about the infamous altercation between Will Smith and Chris Rock at last year's Oscars.

"Nobody on my watch gets slapped tonight," he said. "Except on the back."

Guests and presenters walking the red carpet on the south bank of the River Thames included Colin Farrell, Ana de Armas, Eddie Redmayne, Brian Cox, Florence Pugh, Catherine Zeta-Jones, Cynthia Erivo, Julianne Moore and Lily James.

Heir to the throne Prince William, who is president of Britain's film and television academy, was in the audience alongside his wife, Kate. William wore a tuxedo with black velvet jacket, while Kate dressed in a floor-length Alexander McQueen dress that she also wore to the 2019 BAFTAs.

Helen Mirren paid tribute to William's grandmother, Queen Elizabeth II, who died in September. Mirren, who portrayed the late monarch onscreen in "The Queen" and onstage in "The Audience," called Elizabeth "the nation's leading lady."

Britain's film academy introduced changes to increase the awards' diversity in 2020, when no women were nominated as best director for the seventh year running and all 20 nominees in the lead and supporting performer categories were white.

This year there were 11 female directors up for awards across all categories, including documentary and animated films. But just one of the main best-director nominees was female: Gina Prince-Bythewood for "The Woman King."

BAFTA chair Krishnendu Majumdar said the academy's soul-searching had been "a necessary and humbling process." He said the "vital work of levelling the playing field" would continue.

"West Side Story" star Ariana DeBose opened the show by performing "Sisters are Doin' it for Themselves," with an added rap shoutout to some of the nominated women, including Blanchett, Michelle Yeoh

and Viola Davis.

Blanchett said it had been "an extraordinary year for female performers. To be counted among them is really special."

It was a strong year for Irish actors at the BAFTAs, with Deryl McCormack up for the BAFTA Rising Star award — though he lost out to Emma Mackey — and Condon, Keoghan, Farrell and Brendan Gleeson all getting acting nominations for "Banshees."

McCormack hailed the event as "the Irish BAFTAs."

"It is a small country, but to see the talent that comes out of it is quite amazing," he said.

Writer-director Charlotte Wells won the prize for best British debut for the affecting father-daughter drama "Aftersun." Three-time Oscar winner Sandy Powell became the first costume designer to be awarded the academy's top honor, the BAFTA fellowship.

The harsh world outside showbiz intruded on the awards when Bulgarian journalist Christo Grozev, who works for investigative website Bellingcat, said he was now allowed to attend the awards because of a risk to public security. He features in "Navalny," a film about jailed Russian opposition politician Alexei Navalny that won the best documentary BAFTA.

"Navalny" producer Odessa Rae dedicated the award to Grozev, "our Bulgarian nerd with a laptop, who could not be with us tonight because his life is under threat by the Russian government and Vladimir Putin."

Jamie Lee Curtis, a supporting actress nominee for "Everything Everywhere," said the chance awards season provides to celebrate cinema was more important than who wins.

"It's a moment of celebration in the midst of everything," Curtis told The Associated Press on the red carpet. "It's hard out there. Everywhere. All at once. All the time."

Fond remembrances for Jimmy Carter after entering hospice

By JEFF MARTIN and MAYSOON KHAN Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Dozens of well-wishers made the pilgrimage Sunday to The Carter Center in Atlanta, as prayers and memories of former President Jimmy Carter's legacy were offered up at his small Baptist church in Plains, Georgia, a day after he entered hospice care.

Among those paying homage was his niece, who noted the 39th president's years of service in an emotional address at Maranatha Baptist Church, where Carter taught Sunday school for decades.

"I just want to read one of Uncle Jimmy's quotes," Kim Fuller said during the Sunday school morning service, adding: "Oh, this is going to be really hard."

She referenced this quote from Carter: "I have one life and one chance to make it count for something. I'm free to choose that something. ... My faith demands that I do whatever I can, wherever I can, whenever I can, for as long as I can."

"Maybe if we think about it, maybe it's time to pass the baton," Fuller said before leading those gathered in prayer. "Who picks it up, I have no clue. I don't know. Because this baton's going to be a really big one."

Carter, at age 98 the longest-lived American president, had a recent series of short hospital stays. The Carter Center said in a statement Saturday that he has now "decided to spend his remaining time at home with his family and receive hospice care instead of additional medical intervention."

In Atlanta, people, some traveling many miles, made the trip to The Carter Center to reflect on the life of the former president on a spring-like Sunday under a sunny sky.

"I brought my sons down here today to pay respect for President Carter and teach them a little bit about how great a humanitarian he was, especially in the later stages of his life," said James Culbertson, who drove an hour to Atlanta from Calhoun, Georgia.

The presidential library was closed in honor of President's Day weekend, but people were still showing up to walk past the fountains and through the gardens.

David Brummett of Frederick County, Maryland, said he changed his Sunday morning plans when he heard news that Carter was in hospice care.

Brummett paused near a large statue of Carter, where someone had placed a potted plant of purple

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chrysanthemums at the base.

"Great man, great president, probably under-appreciated by those who didn't know much about him," Brummett said. "People should come here to appreciate the life, and the contributions he made both during his presidency and after."

Margaret Seitter of Atlanta met Carter in the 1980s, when he spoke about foreign relations in one of her classes at Emory University. Seitter and her friend, Larry Goesser, visiting from Florida, were among those paying their respects at The Carter Center.

Both said they were inspired by Carter's work with Habitat for Humanity, which he continued by helping to build houses well into his later life.

"Definitely want to go build a Habitat for Humanity house in his honor," Seitter said.

Following Fuller's Sunday school service at Maranatha Baptist Church, Pastor Hugh Deloach offered prayers for the Carter family, particularly for Rosalynn Carter, the wife of the former president.

The Carters have been married for more than 75 years, making American history as the longest-married presidential couple.

"Lord, especially Mrs. Carter, and God look back on times and years that they've been together and Lord just strengthen her in the power of your might as well," the pastor said.

Others took to social media to remember Carter, who served one term after defeating President Gerald Ford in 1976.

President Joe Biden tweeted: "To our friends Jimmy and Rosalynn and to their family — Jill and I are with you in prayer and send you our love."

"We admire you for the strength and humility you have shown in difficult times. May you continue your journey with grace and dignity, and God grant you peace," Biden wrote.

U.S. Sen. Raphael Warnock, a Georgia Democrat, also took to Twitter to pay homage to Carter: "Across life's seasons, President Jimmy Carter, a man of great faith, has walked with God. In this tender time of transitioning, God is surely walking with him."

"May he, Rosalynn & the entire Carter family be comforted with that peace and surrounded by our love & prayers," Warnock wrote.

The Carters volunteered for decades with Habitat for Humanity, beginning in 1984 and continuing until 2020.

"All of us at Habitat for Humanity are lifting up President and Mrs. Carter in prayer as he enters hospice care," Habitat for Humanity International CEO Jonathan Reckford said in a statement.

"We pray for his comfort and for their peace, and that the Carter family experiences the joy of their relationships with each other and with God in this time," Reckford said.

Nicholas Kristof, a New York Times columnist, tweeted: "Prize winners and truly impressive people. Few are as truly good as Jimmy Carter, who at age 98 is now entering hospice. He leaves this planet so much better than he found it. A great, great, great man."

Carter was a little-known Georgia governor when he began his bid for the presidency ahead of the 1976 election. He went on to defeat Ford, capitalizing as a Washington outsider in the wake of the Vietnam War and the Watergate scandal that drove Richard Nixon from office in 1974.

Carter served a single, tumultuous term and was defeated by Republican Ronald Reagan in 1980, a landslide loss that ultimately paved the way for his decades of global advocacy for democracy, public health and human rights via The Carter Center.

The former president and his wife, Rosalynn, 95, opened the center in 1982. His work there garnered a Nobel Peace Prize in 2002.

Michigan State set to resume classes after fatal shootings

By JOEY CAPPELLETTI Associated Press

EAST LANSING, Mich. (AP) — Michigan State University professor Marco Díaz-Muñoz is still haunted by what he witnessed last Monday night, when a gunman entered his classroom in Berkey Hall, killing two

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of his students in what he describes as "12 minutes of terror."

"Those images haunt me. The images of those two girls," Díaz-Muñoz told The Associated Press.

Arielle Anderson and Alexandria Verner, both juniors, would die that night, Feb. 13. The gunman would shoot six more students during the rampage in two campus buildings. Brian Fraser also would die. Five others would suffer critical gunshot wounds.

Classes are resuming Monday at the 50,000-student university, though Berkey Hall, an academic building, will not reopen. Officials said Sunday that swiftly resuming classes makes sense for the 2 1/2-month balance of the spring term.

"Coming back together is something that will help us," said Thomas Jeitschko, executive vice president for academic affairs, adding that faculty will have extensive flexibility in how they run their courses.

"We know that everybody heals at their own pace and in their own manner. Getting it exactly right will not be possible," Jeitschko said at a news conference Sunday. "Coming back into spaces that are familiar, interacting with people who are familiar, is helpful in the process of healing and grieving."

Díaz-Muñoz said the university had offered to have another professor teach through the end of the semester.

"On one hand, I want to forget it all. But then on the other hand, I think I need to help my students pick up the pieces," Díaz-Muñoz said. "I think I need to help my students build a sense of meaning. It's not going to be the same as before, but there has to be something good out of it."

Some in the community, however, aren't ready. The editorial board of The State News, the student newspaper, wrote Thursday that they wouldn't immediately attend classes, saying more time was needed to heal.

Jo Kovach, president of student government, said "students are scared" and will need "flexibility, empathy and options" from their professors.

Following the shooting, parents arrived from all over the state to bring students home, at least for the rest of last week. A petition demanding hybrid or online options for students received more than 20,000 signatures by Saturday.

Jeitschko said students will have weeks to decide whether to take a regular grade or a credit/no credit option, which would not affect their overall grade-point average.

"Let the semester play out. Come back. Try to heal," he said.

Díaz-Muñoz understands that some students won't be ready to return, saying that some will still have "the fear of looking over their shoulder and looking out the window, at the doors."

"There are some kids in my class that are graduating this semester. And they need this horrific nightmare to have a better ending than the way it ended on Monday," Díaz-Muñoz said.

Sparrow Hospital said three wounded students remained in critical condition Sunday while one was upgraded to fair and another was listed in serious but stable condition. Interim university President Teresa Woodruff said Michigan State would cover funeral costs and hospital expenses.

Dozens of people have died in mass shootings so far in 2023. In 2022, there were more than 600 mass shootings in the U.S. in which at least four people were killed or injured, according to the Gun Violence Archive.

The shots broke out at Michigan State on Monday during evening classes at Berkey Hall and nearby at the MSU Union, a social hub where students can study, eat and relax. Students across the vast campus were ordered to shelter in place for four hours — "run, hide, fight" if necessary — while police hunted for Anthony McRae, 43, who eventually killed himself when confronted by police not far from his home in Lansing.

Police said McRae's mental health could have been a factor, based on a note found on him. He was the lone shooter and had no connection to the victims or to Michigan State as a student or employee, they said.

Díaz-Muñoz describes hearing "explosions" outside his class before a masked man appeared in the doorway of Room 114 and opened fire. Students hid behind desks and chairs before breaking windows to escape.

After "one to two minutes" of shooting, the gunman turned around and left, leaving behind "destruction

and death in my classroom," said Díaz-Muñoz.

For Díaz-Muñoz, the terror didn't end as abruptly. The carnage in his classroom was "something you saw in a movie," he said.

Díaz-Muñoz says he has taken prescription medication as a way to force himself to sleep, only emerging from his room "for a bowl of soup."

The assistant professor said that he is sharing his story in hopes of bringing about gun reform.

"If the lawmakers and the senators saw what I saw, instead of hearing in the news one more statistic. If they had seen those girls and the pools of blood that I saw, the horror we lived, they would be shamed into action," Díaz-Muñoz said.

Biden's test: Sustaining unity as Ukraine war enters Year 2

By AAMER MADHANI and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — One year ago, President Joe Biden was bracing for the worst as Russia massed troops in preparation to invade Ukraine.

As many in the West and even in Ukraine doubted Russian President Vladimir Putin's intentions, the White House was adamant: War was coming and Kyiv was woefully outgunned.

In Washington, Biden's aides prepared contingency plans and even drafts of what the president would say should Ukraine's capital quickly fall to Russian forces — a scenario deemed likely by most U.S. officials. Ukraine's president, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, was offered help getting out of his country if he wanted it.

Yet as Russia's invasion reaches the one-year mark, the city stands and Ukraine has beaten even its own expectations, buoyed by a U.S.-led alliance that has agreed to equip Ukrainian forces with tanks, advanced air defense systems, and more, while keeping the Kyiv government afloat with tens of billions of dollars in direct assistance.

For Biden, Ukraine was an unexpected crisis, but one that fits squarely into his larger foreign policy outlook that the United States and like-minded allies are in the midst of a generational conflict to demonstrate that liberal democracies such as the U.S. can out-deliver autocracies.

In the estimation of the White House, the war transformed what had been Biden's rhetorical warnings — a staple of his 2020 campaign speeches — into an urgent call to action.

Now, as Biden prepares to travel to Poland to mark the anniversary of the war, he faces a legacy-defining moment.

"President Biden's task is to make the case for sustained free world support for Ukraine," said Daniel Fried, a U.S. ambassador to Poland during the Clinton administration and now a distinguished fellow at the Atlantic Council. "This is an important trip. And really, Biden can define the role of the free world in turning back tyranny."

Biden administration officials are quick to direct primary credit for Ukraine's staying power to the courage of its armed forces, with a supporting role to the Russian military's ineptitude. But they also believe that without their early warnings and the massive support they orchestrated, Ukraine would have been all but wiped off the map by now.

Sustaining Ukraine's fight, while keeping the war from escalating into a potentially catastrophic wider conflict with NATO, will go down as one of Biden's enduring foreign policy accomplishments, they argue.

In Poland, Biden is set to meet with allies to reassure them of the U.S. commitment to the region and to helping Ukraine "as long as it takes." It's a pledge that is met with skepticism both at home and abroad as the invasion enters its second year, and as Putin shows no signs of retreating from an invasion that has left more than 100,000 of his own forces killed or wounded, along with tens of thousands of Ukrainian service members and civilians — and millions of refugees.

Biden's job now is, in part, to persuade Americans — and a worldwide audience — that it's more important than ever to stay in the fight, while cautioning that an endgame is unlikely to come quickly.

His visit to Poland is an opportunity to make the case to "countries that repudiate archaic notions of imperial conquest and wars of aggression about the need to continue to support Ukraine and oppose

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Russia," said John Sullivan, who stepped down as the U.S. ambassador to Moscow in September. "We always preach, we are seeking to protect a rules-based international order. It's completely done if Russia gets away with this."

The U.S. resolve to stand up to Russia is also being tested by domestic concerns and economic uncertainty.

Forty-eight percent of the U.S. public say they favor the U.S. providing weapons to Ukraine, with 29% opposed and 22% saying they're neither in favor nor opposed, according to a poll published this past week by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. It's evidence of slipping support since May 2022, less than three months into the war, when 60% of U.S. adults said they were in favor of sending Ukraine weapons.

Further, Americans are about evenly divided on sending government funds directly to Ukraine, with 37% in favor and 38% opposed, with 23% saying neither, according to the AP-NORC poll.

This month, 11 House Republicans introduced what they called the "Ukraine fatigue" resolution urging Biden to end military and financial aid to Ukraine, while pushing Ukraine and Russia to come to a peace agreement. Meanwhile, the more traditionalist national security wing of the GOP, including just-announced 2024 presidential candidate Nikki Haley, a former U.N. envoy, has critiqued the pace of U.S. assistance, pressing for the quicker transfer of more advanced weaponry.

"Don't look at Twitter, look at people in power," Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell told the Munich Security Conference on Friday. "We are committed to helping Ukraine."

But Sen. Dan Sullivan, R-Alaska, said he wants the president and his administration to impress on allies the need to share the burden as Americans grow weary of current levels of U.S. spending to assist Ukraine and Baltic allies.

Sullivan said he hears from Alaskans, "Hey, senator, why are we spending all this? And how come the Europeans aren't?"

The U.S. has provided more economic and military aid than any country since the start of the war, but European nations and other allies have collectively committed tens of billions of dollars to back Ukraine and have taken in millions of refugees fleeing the conflict.

From the beginning of his administration, Biden has argued the world is at a crucial moment pitting autocracies against democracies.

The argument was originally framed with China in mind as America's greatest economic and military adversary, and with Biden looking to reorient U.S. foreign policy toward the Pacific. The pivot toward Asia is an effort that each of his recent predecessors tried and failed to complete as war and foreign policy crises elsewhere shifted their attention.

With that goal, Biden sought to quickly end the U.S. military's presence in Afghanistan seven months into his term. The end to America's longest war was darkened by a chaotic withdrawal as 13 U.S. troops and 169 Afghan civilians looking to flee the country were killed by a bombing near Kabul's international airport carried out by the Islamic State group's Afghanistan affiliate.

U.S. officials say the decision to withdraw from Afghanistan has given the administration the bandwidth and resources to focus on assisting Ukraine in the first land war in Europe since World War II while putting increased focus on countering China's assertive actions in the Indo-Pacific.

While the war in Ukraine caused large price increases in energy and food markets — exacerbating rampant and persistent inflation — Biden aides saw domestic benefits to the president. The war, they argued, allowed Biden to showcase his ability to work across the aisle to maintain funding for Ukraine and showcase his leadership on the global stage.

However the months ahead unfold, it's almost certain to be messy.

While Biden last year had to walk back a public call for regime change in Russia that he had delivered off the cuff from Poland just weeks after the war began, U.S. officials increasingly see internal discontent and domestic pressures on Putin as key to ending the conflict.

"So how does it end?" Undersecretary of State Victoria Nuland said at an event this past week in Washington to mark the coming anniversary. "It ends with a safe, viable Ukraine. It ends with Putin limping back off the battlefield. I hope it ends eventually with a Russian citizenry, who also says, 'That was a bad

deal for us and we want a better future.”

When Biden hosted Zelenskyy in Washington in December, the U.S. president encouraged him to pursue a “just peace” — a framing that the Ukrainian leader chafed against.

“For me as a president, ‘just peace’ is no compromises,” Zelenskyy said. He said the war would end once Ukraine’s sovereignty, freedom and territorial integrity were restored, and Russia had paid back Ukraine for all the damage inflicted by its forces.

“There can’t be any ‘just peace’ in the war that was imposed on us,” he added.

Drama of McCarthy’s election may open House to more cameras

By DAVID BAUDER AP Media Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The difference between a government-controlled camera that followed a climactic moment in Rep. Kevin McCarthy’s election as House speaker and one operated by a C-SPAN journalist was like a fuzzy black-and-white picture contrasted with sparkling, clear color.

In one, McCarthy strides up an aisle in the House chamber and disappears from view. A few people in the front turn to see where he’s going. After a minute, and some audible gasps, everyone stands to watch what the camera doesn’t show.

C-SPAN captured the entire scene, including the exasperated McCarthy’s tense, finger-pointing conversation with Rep. Matt Gaetz, R-Fla., and a GOP colleague held back from lunging at Gaetz.

Some in Congress and C-SPAN are seizing on that moment to ask that the House floor be more fully open to cameras in the interest of transparency. There’s been tangible movement in that direction.

McCarthy, as House speaker, has the final word. His office has signaled that changes are being considered. Already, government cameras have broadened their views.

“I’m guardedly optimistic that the speaker would consider independent media coverage, if not permanently, at least on request,” said Ben O’Connell, C-SPAN director of editorial operations. “We had a lot of positive feedback from both sides of the aisle.”

There’s been little change in how the public has seen House sessions since cameras were first brought in almost 44 years ago, according to Susan Swain, C-SPAN’s co-CEO. For the most part, the podium and lawmakers who come to the front to speak are shown, but little else. There are exceptions when other cameras are allowed, such as when a joint session of Congress is convened for the State of the Union.

The quirk that increased visibility that week in January was that, technically, at the time there was no speaker. Outgoing Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., consented to three C-SPAN cameras, O’Connell said.

“We want to make it as accessible as possible, and I think cameras do that,” said Democratic Rep. Mark Pocan of Wisconsin, who has 25 co-sponsors for a resolution supporting C-SPAN’s bid.

Beyond the McCarthy drama, cameras offered other insights such as when polar political opposites Reps. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, D-N.Y., and Paul Gosar, R-Ariz., had a conversation.

All of Pocan’s co-sponsors are Democrats, which give them little sway with McCarthy, R-Calif. But there’s been some GOP support for the concept, including from Gaetz.

Rep. Chip Roy, R-Texas, was quoted by CNN as saying, “What the American people were able to see unfold on the floor was a good thing for our democracy and our republic.”

Given how the speaker’s vote played out in public, it wouldn’t surprise Pocan if McCarthy had little interest in more closely watched proceedings. But that hasn’t necessarily been the case.

McCarthy’s office didn’t necessarily mind how things looked during the vote and is open to greater access on certain occasions.

“We are exploring a number of options to open up the People’s House to ensure a more transparent and accessible Congress for the American people,” said Mark Bednar, a McCarthy spokesman.

The Senate has similar rules, but has gotten less attention because of the McCarthy vote.

Without fanfare, the government-controlled cameras have been offering some different views in recent weeks, observers said. There are eight cameras installed, up from six four years ago.

What’s uncertain is whether C-SPAN will get what it prefers: its own cameras, installed in the gallery overlooking the House floor, controlled robotically by journalists and available by pool to all news organizations.

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McCarthy's office is likely to move with caution, said Brendan Buck, who worked for then-Speakers John Boehner, R-Ohio, and Paul Ryan, R-Wis., and is now a partner at the communications firm Seven Letter.

"Once you give something, it's hard to take it back," he said. "They have to make sure they are comfortable giving the access, knowing that it may be forever."

Buck said he believed that some rank-and-file members of Congress would be more resistant than leadership. With Washington increasingly segregated by party, the House floor is one of the few places members have to get to know colleagues they might not normally spend time with, he said.

"They don't want every conversation they have to have eyes and ears on it," Buck said. That may not be a good reason to restrict cameras, but it may actually serve democracy, he said.

More cameras might also promote performing rather than legislating, a point Pocan conceded.

"But, honestly, people who are going to cause disruption are going to do it regardless," he said. Pocan doesn't want cameras kept away for the wrong reasons, like the risk a representative could be caught dozing on the job.

Every time that a new speaker has been elected in the 22 years that O'Connell has been at C-SPAN, the company's top executive dutifully writes to request access to the chamber by journalists with video cameras, he said.

This year, he said, "I didn't think we were going to do anything because it felt like we were shouting at a wall."

Yet the speaker's vote, where C-SPAN's video was used widely by other television networks and on social media, led Swain to try again.

The Radio and Television Correspondents Association, which represents broadcast outlets that cover Congress, supports C-SPAN's request. The group's chairman, Jared Halpren, said he appreciates the willingness of McCarthy's office to explore alternatives.

If changes are made, they would be tied directly to the night McCarthy was elected.

"It was a perfect crystallization of the argument for allowing independent media in the chamber on a more regular basis," O'Connell said.

N. Korea makes fresh threats, US bombers fly after ICBM test

By HYUNG-JIN KIM Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea said Sunday its latest intercontinental ballistic missile test was meant to further bolster its "fatal" nuclear attack capacity and threatened additional powerful steps over upcoming military drills between the United States and South Korea.

The United States responded by flying long-range supersonic bombers in a show of force later Sunday for separate joint exercises with South Korean and Japanese warplanes.

Saturday's ICBM test, the North's first missile test since Jan. 1, signals its leader Kim Jong Un is using his rivals' drills as a chance to expand his country's nuclear arsenal to get the upper hand in future dealings with the United States. An expert says North Korea may seek to hold regular operational exercises involving its ICBMs.

North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency said its launch of the Hwasong-15 ICBM was organized "suddenly" without prior notice at Kim's direct order.

KCNA said the launch was designed to verify the weapon's reliability and the combat readiness of the country's nuclear force. It said the missile was fired at a high angle and reached a maximum altitude of about 5,770 kilometers (3,585 miles), flying a distance of about 990 kilometers (615 miles) for 67 minutes before accurately hitting a pre-set area in the waters between the Korean Peninsula and Japan.

The steep-angle launch was apparently to avoid neighboring countries. The flight details reported by North Korea, which roughly matched the launch information previously assessed by its neighbors, show the weapon is theoretically capable of reaching the mainland U.S. if fired at a standard trajectory.

The Hwasong-15 launch demonstrated the North's "powerful physical nuclear deterrent" and its efforts to "turn its capacity of fatal nuclear counterattack on the hostile forces" into an extremely strong one that

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cannot be countered, KCNA said.

Whether North Korea has a functioning nuclear-tipped ICBM is still a source of outside debate, as some experts say the North hasn't mastered a way to protect warheads from the severe conditions of atmospheric reentry. The North says it has acquired such a technology.

The Hwasong-15 is one of North Korea's three existing ICBMs, all of which use liquid propellants that require pre-launch injections and cannot remain fueled for extended periods. The North is pushing to build a solid-fueled ICBM, which would be more mobile and harder to detect before its launch.

"Kim Jong Un has likely determined that the technical reliability of the country's liquid propellant ICBM force has been sufficiently tested and evaluated to now allow for regular operational exercises of this kind," said Ankit Panda, an expert with the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Chang Young-keun, a missile expert at Korea Aerospace University in South Korea, said that North Korea appeared to have launched an upgraded version of the Hwasong-15 ICBM. Chang said the information provided by North Korea showed the missile will likely have a longer potential range than the standard Hwasong-15.

Later Sunday, U.S. B-1B bombers and other aircraft separately trained with South Korean and Japanese fighter jets over and near the Korean Peninsula. A South Korean military statement said Sunday's training reaffirmed Washington's "iron-clad" security commitment to South Korea.

North Korea is sensitive to the deployment of U.S. B-1B bombers, which are capable of carrying a huge payload of conventional weapons.

The North's launch came a day after it vowed an "unprecedentedly" strong response over a series of military drills that Seoul and Washington plan in coming weeks.

In a statement Sunday, Kim Yo Jong, the influential sister of Kim Jong Un, accused South Korea and the U.S. of "openly showing their dangerous greed and attempt to gain the military upper hand and predominant position in the Korean Peninsula."

"I warn that we will watch every movement of the enemy and take corresponding and very powerful and overwhelming counteraction against its every move hostile to us," she said.

North Korea has steadfastly slammed regular South Korea-U.S. military drills as an invasion rehearsal though the allies say their exercises are defensive in nature.

"By now, we know that any action taken by the U.S. and South Korea — however justified from the vantage point of defense and deterrence against (North Korea's) reckless behavior — will be construed and protested as an act of hostility by North Korea," said Soo Kim, a security analyst at the California-based RAND Corporation. "There will always be fodder for (Kim Jong Un's) weapons provocations."

"With nuclear weapons in tow and having mastered the art of coercion and bullying, Kim does not need 'self-defense.' But pitting the U.S. and South Korea as the aggressors allows Kim to justify his weapons development," Soo Kim said.

U.S. National Security Council spokesperson Adrienne Watson said the U.S. will take all necessary measures to ensure the security of the American homeland and South Korea and Japan. South Korea's presidential National Security Council said it will seek to strengthen its "overwhelming response capacity" against potential North Korean aggression based on the military alliance with the United States.

The South Korean and U.S. militaries plan to hold a table-top exercise this week to hone a joint response to a potential use of nuclear weapons by North Korea. The allies are also to conduct another joint computer simulated exercise and field training in March.

The foreign ministers of South Korea and Japan, meeting on the sidelines of a security conference in Germany on Saturday, agreed to boost a trilateral cooperation involving the United States and exchanged in-depth views on the issue of Japan's colonial-era mobilization of forced Korean laborers — a key sticking point in efforts to improve their ties, according to Seoul's Foreign Ministry.

South Korea and Japan are both key U.S. allies but often spat over issues stemming from Tokyo's 1910-45 colonial occupation of the Korean Peninsula. But North Korea's recent missile testing spree is pushing the two countries to explore how to reinforce their security cooperation.

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Today in History: FEB 20, John Glenn orbits Earth

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Monday, Feb. 21, the 51st day of 2023. There are 314 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Feb. 20, 1962, astronaut John Glenn became the first American to orbit the Earth as he flew aboard Project Mercury's Friendship 7 spacecraft, which circled the globe three times in a flight lasting 4 hours, 55 minutes and 23 seconds before splashing down safely in the Atlantic Ocean 800 miles southeast of Bermuda.

On this date:

In 1792, President George Washington signed an act creating the United States Post Office Department.

In 1862, William Wallace Lincoln, the 11-year-old son of President Abraham Lincoln and first lady Mary Todd Lincoln, died at the White House, apparently of typhoid fever.

In 1905, the U.S. Supreme Court, in *Jacobson v. Massachusetts*, upheld, 7-2, compulsory vaccination laws intended to protect the public's health.

In 1907, President Theodore Roosevelt signed an immigration act which excluded "idiots, imbeciles, feeble-minded persons, epileptics, insane persons" from being admitted to the United States.

In 1933, Congress proposed the 21st Amendment to the U.S. Constitution to repeal Prohibition.

In 1938, Anthony Eden resigned as British foreign secretary following Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain's decision to negotiate with Italian dictator Benito Mussolini.

In 1965, America's Ranger 8 spacecraft crashed on the moon, as planned, after sending back thousands of pictures of the lunar surface.

In 1987, a bomb left by Unabomber Ted Kaczynski exploded behind a computer store in Salt Lake City, seriously injuring store owner Gary Wright.

In 1998, Tara Lipinski of the U.S. won the ladies' figure skating gold medal at the Nagano (NAH'-guh-noh) Olympics; Michelle Kwan won the silver.

In 2003, a fire sparked by pyrotechnics broke out during a concert by the group Great White at The Station nightclub in West Warwick, Rhode Island, killing 100 people and injuring about 200 others.

In 2005, death claimed actor Sandra Dee at age 62; musical actor John Raitt at age 88; and counter-culture writer Hunter S. Thompson at age 67.

In 2020, a poll by the Associated Press and the NORC Center for Public Affairs Research found more Americans expressing some concern about catching the flu than about catching the coronavirus.

Ten years ago: The Obama administration announced a broad new effort to fight the growing theft of American trade secrets following fresh evidence linking cyber-stealing to China's military. Former U.S. Rep. Jesse Jackson Jr., D-Ill., entered a guilty plea in federal court to criminal charges that he'd engaged in a scheme to spend \$750,000 in campaign funds on personal items; his wife, Sandra Jackson, pleaded guilty to filing false joint federal income tax returns.

Five years ago: Students who survived a Parkland, Florida school shooting traveled to Tallahassee to urge state lawmakers to prevent another massacre, but procedural moves in the legislature effectively halted any effort to ban assault-style rifles like the one used in the attack. President Donald Trump directed the Justice Department to move to ban devices like the rapid-fire bump stocks used in the Las Vegas massacre. Canadians Tessa Virtue and Scott Moir became the most decorated figure skaters in history, capturing the gold medal in ice dancing on Day 11 of the Winter Olympics in South Korea.

One year ago: Russia extended military drills near Ukraine's northern borders after two days of sustained shelling along the contact line between Ukrainian soldiers and Russia-backed separatists in eastern Ukraine. Ukraine's president appealed for a cease-fire. (Russia would invade four days later.) The White House said President Joe Biden would nominate a Black woman with "impeccable experience" for a vacancy on the Supreme Court. (Biden would nominate Ketanji Brown Jackson for the seat on Feb. 25.) In

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his former home arena in Cleveland, LeBron James led his team to a 163-160 victory over a team led by Kevin Durant in the NBA All-Star Game.

Today's birthdays: Racing Hall of Famer Roger Penske is 86. Singer-songwriter Buffy Sainte-Marie is 82. Hockey Hall of Famer Phil Esposito is 81. Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., is 81. Movie director Mike Leigh is 80. Actor Brenda Blethyn is 77. Actor Sandy Duncan is 77. Actor Peter Strauss is 76. Rock musician Billy Zoom (X) is 75. Former British Prime Minister Gordon Brown is 72. Actor John Voldstad is 72. Newspaper heiress Patricia Hearst is 69. Actor Anthony Head is 69. Country singer Leland Martin is 66. Actor James Wilby is 65. Rock musician Sebastian Steinberg is 64. Comedian Joel Hodgson is 63. Basketball Hall of Famer Charles Barkley is 60. Rock musician Ian Brown (Stone Roses) is 60. Actor French Stewart is 59. Actor Ron Eldard is 58. Model Cindy Crawford is 57. Actor Andrew Shue is 56. Actor Lili Taylor is 56. Actor Andrea Savage is 50. Singer Brian Littrell is 48. Actor Lauren Ambrose is 45. Actor Jay Hernandez is 45. Actor Chelsea Peretti is 45. Country musician Coy Bowles is 44. Actor Michael Zegen is 44. Actor Majandra Delfino is 42. Actor Jocko Sims is 42. Singer-musician Chris Thile is 42. Actor-singer Jessie Mueller is 40. MLB All-Star pitcher Justin Verlander is 40. Comedian Trevor Noah is 39. Actor Jake Richardson is 38. Actor Daniella Pineda is 36. Actor Miles Teller is 36. Singer Rihanna is 35. Actor Jack Falahee is 34.