



# Trump-Putin bromance flowered and then soured

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# THE GARDNER NEWS

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# Illegal Chinese vapes funneled into U.S.



The supply chain ferrying illegal Chinese-made vapes into the United States mostly operates in plain sight.  
PHOTOS BY CBP/HANDOUT VIA REUTERS

## Analysis finds billions of dollars in imports unaccounted for

Emma Rumney, Kaylee Kang and Tom Polansek  
REUTERS

CHICAGO – From an office a 15-minute drive from Chicago’s O’Hare International Airport, one small firm helped import millions of unauthorized Chinese-made vapes last year alone, forming a key link in the supply chain feeding U.S. demand for illegal e-cigarettes.

In a little over four years, the firm, a customs brokerage run by a man named Jay Kim, became a go-to broker for the Chinese vape industry. The firm worked on 60% of all shipments of vapes and vape parts from China to the United States in 2024 registered by the Food and Drug Administration, according to a Reuters analysis.

“A lot of them have FDA authorization,” Kim said in an interview in his office in April, referring to the vape shipments his firm handled.

However, FDA data on imports into the U.S. of FDA-regulated goods such as tobacco products or medicines showed the products Kim’s firm helped bring into the United States included unauthorized brands like Lost Mary and Geek Bar.

The FDA has declared those brands illegal to import or sell, warning their array of fruit and candy flavors may appeal to children. The agency says nicotine can harm developing brains and impact attention, learning and mood in young people, who can get hooked more easily on the addictive chemical.

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Unauthorized Chinese-made vapes were seized in a raid outside of Chicago by members of the Food and Drug Administration and U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

# Another forecasting tool gets scrapped

Experts: Cuts damage U.S. status as science leader

Dinah Voyles Pulver  
USA TODAY

The heart-wrenching July 4 flooding in Texas served as a stark reminder of the importance of accurate and timely weather forecasts.

As extreme rainfall events grow more intense, such tragedies are expected to increase. Further improvement to forecasts is critical, but meteorologists worry that with the additional cuts planned by the Trump administration, the nation’s weather and climate research programs won’t be able to keep up.

The latest blow was the announcement by the U.S. Navy that it would no longer transmit data from aging satellites past June 30, roughly 15 months earlier than expected. Later, the department extended the deadline to July 31.

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# EU could retaliate if no trade deal is struck

Francesca Chambers  
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON – The European Union warned it could retaliate against the United States if a trade agreement has not been reached by Aug. 1, opening a new front in the fight with President Donald Trump over higher tariffs.

Negotiators from the EU have worked for weeks to strike a deal with the Trump administration. In a statement on July 12, the European Commission said it would continue to work toward a resolution.

“At the same time, we will take all necessary steps to safeguard EU interests, including the adoption of proportionate countermeasures if required,” European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said in a statement.

The EU paused planned

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