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The Times

MONDAY, JULY 14, 2025 | TIMESONLINE.COM

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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



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.

Trump bromance with Putin has soured

Kim Hjelmggaard, Francesca Chambers and Cybele Mayes-Osterman
USA TODAY

President Donald Trump said he would end the war in Ukraine within his first 24 hours in office.

But now, more than 4,000 hours in, Trump’s patience with Russian President Vladimir Putin, whom the U.S. president in June called “very kind,” appears to be wearing thin.

Relations have hit a wall as Russia’s leader has pushed forward with intensifying drone and missile attacks on Ukrainian cities while appearing to repeatedly rebuff Trump’s attempts to broker a ceasefire.

“We get a lot of (expletive) thrown at us by Putin, if you want to know the

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See BROMANCE, Page 2A

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