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Two hospitalized after 'white powdery substance' sent to Sen. Ted Cruz's Houston campaign office



Inside C2

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U.S. military comes to grips with over-reliance on Chinese imports

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - A Pentagon-led review ordered by President Donald Trump has identified hundreds of instances where the U.S. military depends on foreign countries, especially China, for critical materials, U.S. officials said.

The study is expected to be released in the coming weeks and aims to lessen the U.S. military's reliance on foreign countries and strengthen U.S. industry.

Among the study's conclusions will be a determination the United States is too dependent on foreign suppliers for a range of items including some micro-electronics, tiny components such as integrated circuits and transistors, the officials told Reuters on condition of anonymity.

These kinds of essential components are embedded in advanced electronics used in everything from satellites and cruise missiles to drones and cellphones.

The focus on China reflects an effort under Trump to address the risks to U.S. national security from Beijing's growing military and economic clout. Pentagon officials want to be sure China is not able to hobble America's military by cutting off supplies of materials or by sabotaging technology it exports.

The report could add to mounting trade tensions with China, bolstering the Trump administration's "Buy American" initiative, which aims to help drum up billions of dollars more in arms sales for U.S. manufacturers and create more jobs.

Lieutenant Colonel Mike Andrews, a Pentagon spokesman, did not comment on the contents of the report but told Reuters the study would make recommendations "to ensure a robust, resilient, secure and ready manufacturing and defense industrial base."

China, which has also become the main supplier of many

of the rare earth minerals used by the United States, will be given special emphasis in the report, said the officials who spoke to Reuters on condition of anonymity.

A January analysis from the United States Geological Survey said the United States produced no rare earth minerals in 2017 while China accounted for 81 percent of global mine production. Rare earth minerals are used in magnets, radars and consumer electronics. Aside from the risk that a foreign power could cut off vital supplies needed to keep the U.S. military up and running, other risks include the threat of sabotaged equipment or espionage.

The Pentagon has long fretted that "kill switches" could be embedded in transistors that could turn off sensitive U.S. systems in a conflict. U.S. intelligence officials also



FILE PHOTO: U.S. military equipment arrives in the harbour of Bremerhaven, Germany

warned this year about the possibility China could use Chinese-made mobile phones and network equipment to spy on Americans. When the study is released, it will not provide a detailed inventory of all of the weaknesses in the supply chain. These will be in a classified annex.

A U.S. official said the report will also examine U.S. shortcomings that contribute to purchases from foreign companies, includ-

ing roller-coaster U.S. defense budgets that make it difficult for companies to predict government demand. Another weakness is in U.S. science and technology education. Advocates of the study say it is a late but critical look at ways to address America's loss of manufacturing, whose toll on national security gets far less attention than the jobs lost, and the political wave that it created in rust-belt states that helped elect Trump president in 2016.

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Two hospitalized after 'white powdery substance' sent to Sen. Ted Cruz's Houston campaign office

By Samantha Ketterer

Two people were hospitalized after being exposed to a "white powdery substance" that was addressed to Sen. Ted Cruz's Houston campaign office, according to the Houston Police Department. Tests later determined that the substance was negative for any hazardous substance, the Houston Fire Department said. Offices on the ninth floor of the Phoenix Tower, at 3200 Southwest Freeway, were temporarily evacuated. A piece of mail addressed to the senator's campaign office contained the white powdery substance, said Catherine Frazier, a spokeswoman for Cruz. She said the two injured were not members of the senator's staff.

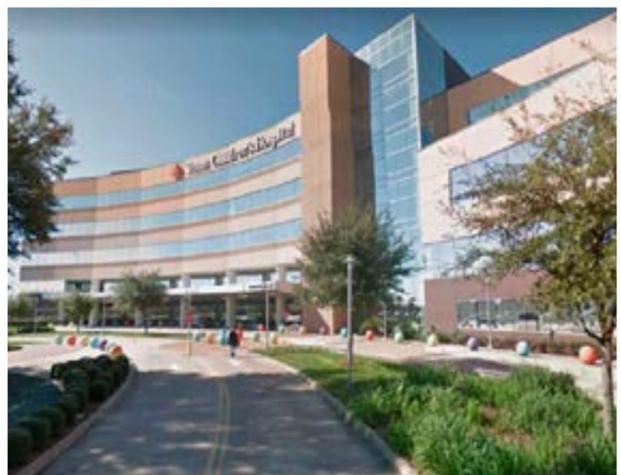


Employees at the Phoenix Tower were evacuated after a white powdery substance was found on Tuesday, Oct. 2, 2018.

Texas oil companies pump more than \$17 million into fighting Washington carbon tax

Texas oil companies have pumped more than \$17 million into a campaign opposing a carbon tax in Washington state. The refiners Phillips 66 of Houston and Andeavor of San Antonio, and the U.S. subsidiary of the British oil major BP have poured more than \$17 million into "No on 1631" campaign, which seeks to defeat the carbon tax initiative in the Nov. 6 election. If passed, the initiative would create the first carbon tax in the United States. Those opposed to the initiative have raised more than \$20 million, according to state campaign finance records. Those supporting Initiative 1631 have raised more than \$6.1 million, with The Nature Conservancy donating the largest amount at \$1

million. Initiative 1631 would impose a fee of \$15 per metric ton of carbon on large emitters that would increase by \$2 each subsequent year and adjust for inflation. The fee would be imposed on fossil fuels sold or used within the state and electricity generated within or imported for consumption in Washington. Supporters say the initiative would raise \$2.3 billion during the first five years, and the funds would be collected in a "clean up pollution fund" in the state treasury. Seventy percent of the funds would be used on clean air and energy investments, with another 25 percent used for clean water and healthy forest investment. The remainder would be spent on what the initiative calls "healthy communities investments."



FILE - This April 2, 2010 file photo shows a Tesoro Corp. refinery, including a gas flare flame that is part of normal plant operations, in Anacortes, Wash. A campaign bankrolled by the oil industry has raised \$20.46 million to defeat a carbon pollution fee on the ballot in Washington state aiming at tackling climate change.

Advertisement for the 2018 Houston Travel Shopping Guide. It features a collage of images including a travel guide cover, a map, and various Houston landmarks. Text includes '2018休斯頓旅遊購物指南 HOUSTON TRAVEL SHOPPING GUIDE VOLUME 5' and '請至本報社 免費取閱' (Please come to our newspaper office for free pickup). It also lists several Houston locations and their phone numbers.

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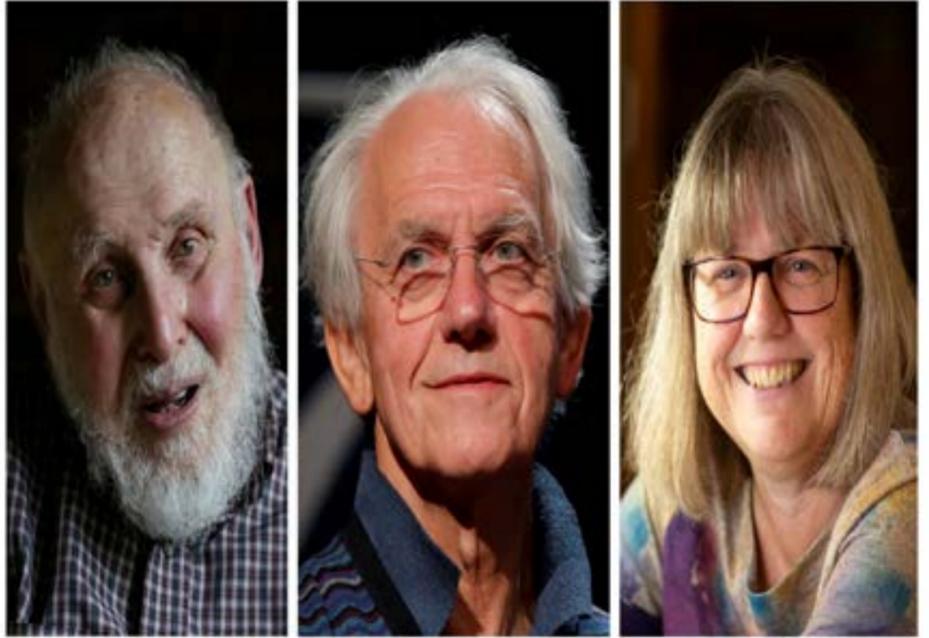
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Editor's Choice



Dogs are seen on Anusara's desk as she works in a office of a digital advertising agency which promotes bring-your-dog-to-work in Bangkok



A combination picture shows the Nobel Prize for Physics 2018 award winners (L-R) Arthur Ashkin of the U.S., Gerard Mourou of France and Donna Strickland of Canada, October 2, 2018. REUTERS/Brendan McDermid/Charles Platiau/Peter Power TPX IMAGES OF THE DAY



U.S. President Trump awards the Medal of Honor to former U.S. Army medic Shurer in the East Room of the White House in Washington



An aerial view of an area devastated by an earthquake in Palu, Central Sulawesi



Cardi B leaves the 109th Precinct in Queens, New York



Vendors selling vegetables wait for customers at a market in Nanning, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China September 30, 2018. Picture taken September 30, 2018. REUTERS/Stringer



Britain's PM May prepares her Conservative Party Conference keynote speech in Birmingham



Placards of Cameroon President Paul Biya are seen above the armchairs displayed for sale in Yaounde

Paris (AFP) - They told him he was too ugly, too short and that he couldn't sing. But Charles Aznavour, who has died aged 94, became one of the greatest singer-songwriters of the 20th century.

He was dubbed France's Frank Sinatra, but unlike the American crooner, Aznavour wrote his own songs, often breaking taboos about marriage, homosexuality and men talking about their emotions. With lyrics that talked of sex, depression and flagging libidos, he said what was then unsayable, in hits such as 1973's "What Makes a Man", about a gay transvestite.

Still performing to packed stadiums well into his 90s, Aznavour continued to write every day and push the boundaries, eulogising the smell of his Swedish wife's armpits in one song celebrating their 50 years of marriage.

"It's a kind of sickness I have, talking about things you're not supposed to talk about," he said.

"I started with homosexuality and I wanted to break every taboo."



Aznavour, pictured in 1956, was also a gifted actor, bringing a rare intensity to the stage, turning every song into "a one-act play"

"I felt strongly and I had to take a stand," he said.

The same fearlessness made him a tireless campaigner for the recognition of the slaughter of Armenians by Ottoman Turks during World War I as genocide, becoming Armenia's ambassador to Switzerland and permanent delegate to the United Nations.

Born Shahnour Varinag Aznavourian in

"The Eternal Crooner Poet" Charles Aznavour, France's "Sinatra" Has Died

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor



The career of the man who would later be named "Entertainer of the Century" got off to a rocky start, once being booed off stage (AFP Photo/Stan Honda)

Paris on May 22, 1924, to parents who had fled the massacres, Aznavour sold more than 180 million records in a career spanning eight decades and as many languages.

A gifted actor as well as linguist, Aznavour brought a rare intensity to the stage, turning every song into "a one-act play".

And it was his leading role in Francois Truffaut's film "Shoot the Piano Player" in 1960 that catapulted him to fame outside France.

- Refugee heroes - He would later appear in the Oscar-winning "The Tin Drum", playing a kindly Jewish toy seller.

In fact, Aznavour saw himself "more as an actor who sings than a singer who acts".

Yet starring in more than 60 films did not stop him also writing over 1,300 songs.



Aznavour, right, got his big break when he opened for the rising French singing star Edith Piaf, second-from-left. (Photo/AFP)

It was only by chance that Aznavour was born in the French capital, where his parents were waiting in vain for a visa for the US after escaping the collapsing Ottoman empire.

Instead they set up a little emigre restaurant called Le Caucase (the Caucasus), where Aznavour and his sister sang and danced from a very young age.

Later the family hid Jews and Armenians fleeing the Gestapo during the German occupation, including the Resistance leader Missak Manouchian, who was eventually captured and beheaded by the Nazis.

Manouchian's wife Melinee only escaped thanks to the Aznavourians, who were later honoured by Israel for their bravery. Having left school early -- a decision he forever regretted -- to become a song-and-dance man, Aznavour got his big break after the war when he opened for the rising French star Edith Piaf.

She took him to America as her manager and songwriter while he worked on his voice, "singing until my throat was sore. And it paid off. My voice developed from a small tenth of an octave to a range of nearly three octaves," he said.

Aznavour lived with Piaf for eight years, though he insisted he never became one of her many lovers because "she was not my type".



He was dubbed "France's Frank Sinatra," but unlike the American crooner, Aznavour wrote his own songs, often breaking taboos about marriage, homosexuality and men talking about their emotions.

Either way she badgered him into getting a nose job on a hooter that he claimed resembled a "long, long can opener".

- "Armenia in my heart" -

Even so, his solo career had a rocky start,

with the man who would later be named "Entertainer of the Century" by CNN and Time Online, once being booed off stage.

"They said I was ugly and short; that the ill should not be allowed to sing," he told AFP, referring to his unique tenor voice.

But he had his first number one hit in 1956 with "Sur Ma Vie" (In My Life). That was followed by one of his biggest hits, "Je M'voyais Deja" (It Will Be My Day).

Buoyed by the success of "Shoot the Piano Player" he took New York's Carnegie Hall by storm in 1963 before touring the world and seeing his songs recorded by stars from Ray Charles to Liza Minnelli and Fred Astaire.



Au revoir, Charles Aznavour.

He also performed duets with Sinatra, Elton John, Sting and Celine Dion and his song "She" was re-recorded by Elvis Costello for the British romantic comedy "Notting Hill".

Aznavour was always strongly associated with France's large ethnic Armenian community. In 1988 he led humanitarian efforts to help the victims of the earthquake that shattered his parents' homeland.

"Armenia and Armenians are in my heart and in my blood. It was unthinkable that I would do nothing faced by so much misfortune and suffering," he wrote, describing the quake as a turning point in his life.

A father of six, who married three times, he said the "first time I was too young, the second I was too stupid, and the third I married a woman from a different culture and I learned tolerance". (Courtesy <https://www.yahoo.com/news>)

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Cigarette Butts Are The Single Greatest Source Of Ocean Trash - NOT Plastic Straws

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor



Cigarette butts collected during the 2012 International Coastal Cleanup in Oregon.

OVERVIEW

Cigarette butts have long been the single most collected item on the world's beaches, with a total of more than 60 million collected over 32 years.

Environmentalists have taken aim at the targets systematically, seeking to eliminate or rein in big sources of ocean pollution — first plastic bags, then eating utensils and, most recently, drinking straws.

Yet the No. 1 man-made contaminant in the world's oceans is the small but ubiquitous cigarette butt — and it has mostly avoided regulation. That soon could change, if a group of committed activists has its way.

A leading tobacco industry academic, a California lawmaker and a worldwide surfing organization are among those arguing cigarette filters should be banned. The nascent campaign hopes to be bolstered by linking activists focused on human health with those focused on the environment.

"It's pretty clear there is no health benefit from filters. They are just a marketing tool. And they make it easier for people to smoke," said Thomas Novotny, a professor of public health at San Diego State University.

A California assemblyman proposed a ban on cigarettes with filters, but couldn't get the proposal out of committee. A New York state senator has written legislation to create a rebate for butts returned to redemption centers, though that idea also stalled.

THE MOST LITTERED ITEM IN THE WORLD

Cigarette butts have now also fallen into the sights of one of the nation's biggest anti-smoking organizations, the Truth initiative. The organization uses funds from a legal settlement between state attorneys general and tobacco companies to deliver tough messages against smoking.

eo Music Awards to launch a new campaign against cigarette butts. As in a couple of previous ads delivered via social media, the organization is going after "the most littered item in the world."

It's no wonder that cigarette butts have drawn attention. The vast majority of the 5.6 trillion cigarettes manufactured worldwide each year come with filters made of cellulose acetate, a form of plastic that can take a decade or more to decompose.

The Ocean Conservancy has sponsored a beach cleanup every year since 1986. For 32 consecutive years, cigarette butts have been the single most collected item on the world's beaches, with a total of more than 60 million collected over that time.

People sometimes dump that trash directly on to beaches but, more often, it washes into the oceans from countless storm drains, streams and rivers around the world.

Those discarded filters usually contain synthetic fibers and hundreds of chemicals used to treat tobacco, said Novotny, who is pursuing further research into what kinds of cigarette waste leech into the soil, streams, rivers and oceans.

PLASTIC FIBERS THREATEN TO FOUL THE FOOD CHAIN

"More research is needed to determine exactly what happens to all of that," said Nick Mallos, director of the Trash Free Seas campaign for the Ocean Conservancy.



Cigarette butts collected on a Florida beach in 2010.

Tobacco companies initially explored the use of filters in the mid-20th century as a potential

method for ameliorating spiraling concerns about the health impacts of tobacco. But research suggested that smoke-bound carcinogens couldn't be adequately controlled.

Over the last two decades, the tobacco companies also feared being held responsible for mass cigarette litter, said Novotny. Internal company documents show the industry considered everything from biodegradable filters, to anti-litter campaigns to mass distribution of portable and permanent ashtrays.

Industry giant R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co. launched a "portable ashtray" campaign in 1991, distributing disposable pouches for butts in test marketing with its Vantage, Camel and Salem brands.

BIG TOBACCO TRIES, ON OCCASION, TO CLEAN UP ITS BUTTS

A spokesman for Philip Morris USA, another big manufacturer, said admonitions on cigarette packs are part of a campaign that also includes installing trash receptacles, encouraging the use of portable ashtrays and support for enforcement of litter laws.

But academics who followed such campaigns said they encountered an essential problem: Most smokers preferred to flick their butts.

In industry focus groups, some smokers said they thought filters were biodegradable, possibly made of cotton; others said they needed to grind the butts out on the ground, to assure they didn't set a refuse can afire; others said they were so "disgusted" by the sight or smell of cigarette ashtrays, they didn't want

to dispose of their smokes that way. In one focus group cited in industry documents, smokers said tossing their butts to the ground was "a natural extension of the defiant/rebellious smoking ritual."

"Their efforts — anti-litter campaigns and handheld and permanent ashtrays — did not substantially affect smokers' entrenched 'butt flicking' behaviors," said a research paper co-authored by Novotny.



Cigarette butts found on a beach in Puerto Rico during the 2010 International Coastal Cleanup.

That's left cities, counties and private groups like the Ocean Conservancy to bear the brunt of the cleanups. There have been a few other quixotic solutions, like the French amusement park that recently trained a half dozens crows to collect spent cigarettes and other trash.

Cigarette companies on occasion have looked for alternatives. Participants in one focus group gathered by R.J. Reynolds in the 1990s mused that the company might find a way to make edible filters, possibly of mint candy or crackers.

The industry looked for more practical solutions, including paper filters, but prototypes made the smoke taste harsh. And other materials, like cotton, were deemed to make a drag on a cigarette less satisfying.

Mervyn Witherspoon, a British chemist who once worked for the biggest independent maker of acetate filters, said the industry's focus on finding a biodegradable filter "came and went, because there was never a pressure to do it."

"We would work on it and find some solutions but the industry would find something more interesting to work on and it would go on the backburner again," Witherspoon said.

A GREEN ALTERNATIVE AND AN ANTI-BUTT COALITION

Witherspoon is now working as a technical adviser to Greenbutts, a San Diego-based startup that says it has developed a filter made of organic materials that will quickly break down in soil or water.

The businessmen say their product is ready for market, and can be delivered for a reasonable price if mass produced. But Lisauskas said that to really take off, the company needs a boost from the government.

Novotny said he hopes the push for legislation will gain steam if environmental organizations like the Ocean Conservancy and the Surfrider Foundation can establish common cause with health-oriented organizations like the American Cancer Society.

Researchers have suspected that filters increase illness by encouraging people to smoke more often and to inhale more deeply when they smoke. Last December, an article in the Journal of the National Cancer Institute said that "altered puffing and inhalation may make smoke available to lung cells prone to adenocarcinomas."

Those are cancers that starts in the glands that line the inside of the lungs and other organs. And the incidence rate of the disease has been on the increase, Novotny said.

So far, legislators who back such proposals say their attempts at banning cigarette filters have had trouble making headway with fellow lawmakers, many of whom receive campaign contributions from the tobacco industry.

California Assemblyman Mark Stone, who represents a coastal district that includes Monterey, said public momentum for a ban on cigarette filters is increasing as more people come to understand the environmental and health toll for what he called "a little toxic bomb."

"The idea to get rid of the useless part of this product is finally gaining traction in the public," said Stone, a Democrat, "and I hope that the Legislature soon follows the popular sentiment." (Courtesy https://www.nbcnews.com/news)

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