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Michael Flynn says he is not ready to be sentenced, U.S. says he is ready



Inside C2

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Democratic National Committee opposes Iowa, Nevada vote-by-phone

NEW YORK/WASHINGTON (Reuters) - Democratic National Committee officials on Friday rejected plans to let people participate in Iowa's and Nevada's early caucuses by phone because of security concerns, drawing fire from at least one candidate for leaving voters out of the party's presidential contest.

Each U.S. state party hosts nominating contests ahead of the 2020 election. Iowa's caucus is the first in the nation, on Feb. 3, and Nevada's follows later that month.

Unlike a primary election, Democrats at the caucus gather in groups to show their support for candidates. The events are lengthy and held in winter, making it difficult for people to attend, so both states had introduced plans to let some voters participate over the phone in a "virtual caucus."

There were signs those systems could be hacked. On Friday, DNC Chair Tom Perez and other officials said no telephone caucus technology "meets our standard of security and reliability," and said they would recommend not using those systems in Iowa and Nevada.

"The DNC needs to get its act together so that it doesn't disenfranchise tens of thousands of Iowans," said Julian Castro, a Democratic presidential candidate and former federal housing chief, in a video here posted online. "They either need to make sure that they figure out a secure virtual caucus process or, alternatively, allow another form of absentee voting."



FILE PHOTO: U.S. Democratic presidential candidate Bernie Sanders speaks at his caucus night rally Des Moines, Iowa February 1, 2016, REUTERS/Rick Wilking/File Photo

China-U.S. trade talk teams keeping 'effective communication': China

BEIJING (Reuters) - Chinese and U.S. trade negotiating teams are maintaining effective communication, China's Foreign Ministry said on Friday, less than 48 hours before U.S. tariffs kick in on an additional \$125 billion in Chinese goods.

The tit-for-tat tariff war now involves hundreds of billions of dollars of each country's goods and threatens global economic growth. Uncertainty about when or how it could end has roiled markets and complicated corporations' long-term investment plans.

Trade war with U.S. won't affect China's pork supply: Chinese ministry
The United States will begin collecting a 15% tariff on an estimated \$125 billion of Chinese goods at 12:01 a.m. EDT (0401 GMT) on Sunday, including smartwatches, flat panel televisions and footwear. U.S. tariffs have been imposed on \$250 billion of Chinese products so far since the trade war began in 2018.

On Friday, U.S. President Donald Trump denied the tariffs were affecting the U.S. economy. "We don't have a Tariff problem (we are reigning in bad and/or unfair players), we have a Fed problem. They don't have a clue!" he wrote in a Twitter post.

Trump has criticized the U.S. Federal Reserve and its leadership for not lowering interest rates further to stimulate the economy.
Trump said General Motors Co (GM.N) should begin moving its operations in China, where it started joint ventures in 1997, back to the United States.

"General Motors, which was once the Giant of Detroit, is now one of the smallest auto manufacturers there. They moved major plants to China, BEFORE I CAME INTO OFFICE," Trump tweeted. "This was done despite the saving help given them by the USA. Now they should start moving back to America again?"



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U.S. health agency proposes reversing Obamacare transgender protections

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) on Friday proposed a rule that would roll back protections for transgender patients under Obamacare, the second rule this month the agency has put forward to allow health care providers to deny services to them.

The landmark Affordable Care Act passed during the Obama administration, otherwise known as Obamacare, extended civil rights protections in healthcare to gender identity and the termination of a pregnancy. The agency's Office of Civil Rights said it posted a proposed rule to roll back those provisions of the law.

"When Congress prohibited sex discrimination, it did so according to the plain meaning of the term, and we are making our regulations conform," Roger Severino, head of

the Office of Civil Rights, said on a call with reporters.

HHS said it has not enforced the protections since December 2016 after a federal court found they conflicted with a separate existing law.

Typically after HHS proposes a rule, there is a 60-day comment period before the measure is finalized.

Earlier this month, the Office of Civil Rights released a final "conscience rule" allowing doctors, nurses and other health care workers to opt out of participating in or referring procedures with which they disagree, such as abortions, sterilizations and the treatment of gay and transgender patients.

The Trump administration, including HHS, has sought to restrict access to abortion.

LGBTQ advocacy groups and Democratic-controlled states have decried the Trump administration's efforts to erode protections for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer citizens.

"This move by the Trump administration is nothing less than an act of violence against those whose health care needs have historically been ignored, neglected, and dismissed," Louise Melling, deputy legal director of the American Civil Liberties Union, said in a statement

Two dozen U.S. states and municipalities sued the Trump administration earlier this week to stop the enforcement of the rule, which is almost certain to be challenged in court.

Severino, of the civil rights office, said the agency will still enforce civil rights protections on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, age, and sex

Michael Flynn says he is not ready to be sentenced, U.S. says he is ready

(Reuters) - Lawyers for former U.S. national security adviser Michael Flynn accused the federal government of stalling their efforts to defend him, and said the former top aide to Donald Trump is not ready to be sentenced for lying about his discussions with a Russian ambassador.

FILE PHOTO: Former U.S. national security adviser Michael Flynn passes by members of the media as he departs after his sentencing was delayed at U.S. District Court in Washington, U.S., December 18, 2018. REUTERS/Joshua Roberts
Flynn's lawyers lodged their objections to the government's conduct in a joint status report filed on Friday with the Washington, D.C., federal court.

Lawyers for the government countered that Flynn is ready for sentencing, perhaps as

soon as Oct. 21. Both sides agreed that Flynn's cooperation with various government probes is finished.

Flynn pleaded guilty in December 2017 to lying to the FBI about his conversations the prior December with Sergey Kislyak, who was Russia's ambassador to the United States, about U.S. sanctions imposed on Moscow by President Barack Obama.

That plea came in connection with Special Counsel Robert Mueller's since-completed probe into Russian interference in the 2016 U.S. election.

Flynn's sentencing was originally scheduled for December 2018, and U.S. District Judge Emmet Sullivan will need to decide whether a further delay is warranted.

Citing the status report, Sullivan scheduled a Sept. 10 conference to discuss the case.

In the report, Flynn's lawyer, Sidney Powell, said she has not had enough time to review the case, and accused the government of unfairly refusing to hand over information relevant to the defense.

She said this includes transcripts and recordings of phone calls supposedly underlying the charges against Flynn, and which the government has "steadfastly refused to produce." Lawyers for the U.S. Department of Justice countered that the government has "exceeded" its disclosure obligations, and was unaware of any classified information that Flynn needed to review.

The Justice Department proposed that Flynn be sentenced between Oct. 21 and 23 or between Nov. 1 and 15. Flynn's lawyers asked for 90 days before issuing of another status report.

Flynn's discussions with Kislyak occurred in the run-up to Trump's January 2017 inauguration, after Flynn had worked on Trump's election campaign.



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Editor's Choice



The motorcade of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un leaves following his meeting with U.S. President Donald Trump during the second U.S.-North Korea summit in Hanoi, Vietnam



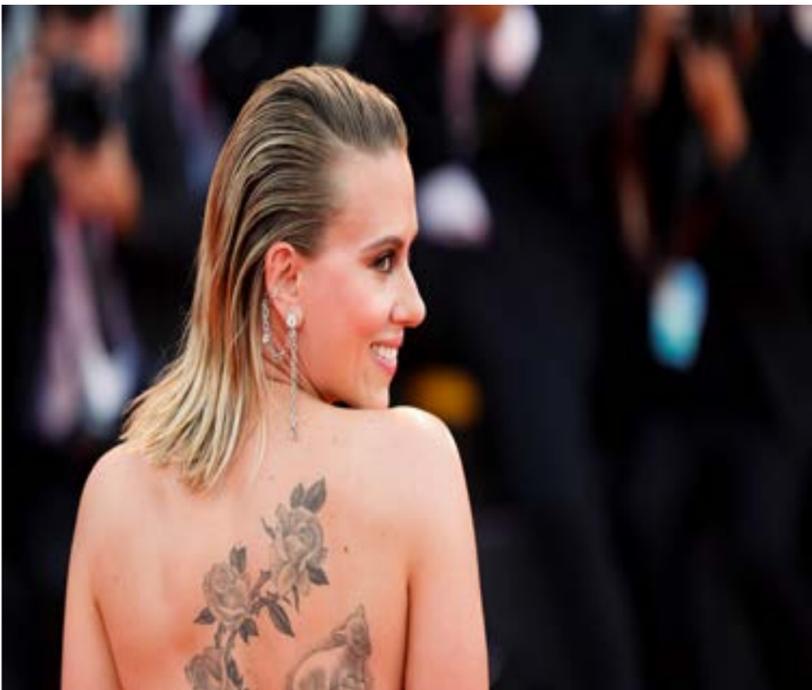
Southern separatist fighters patrol a road during clashes with government forces in Aden



U.S. President Donald Trump speaks at the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) annual meeting at National Harbor in Oxon Hill, Maryland



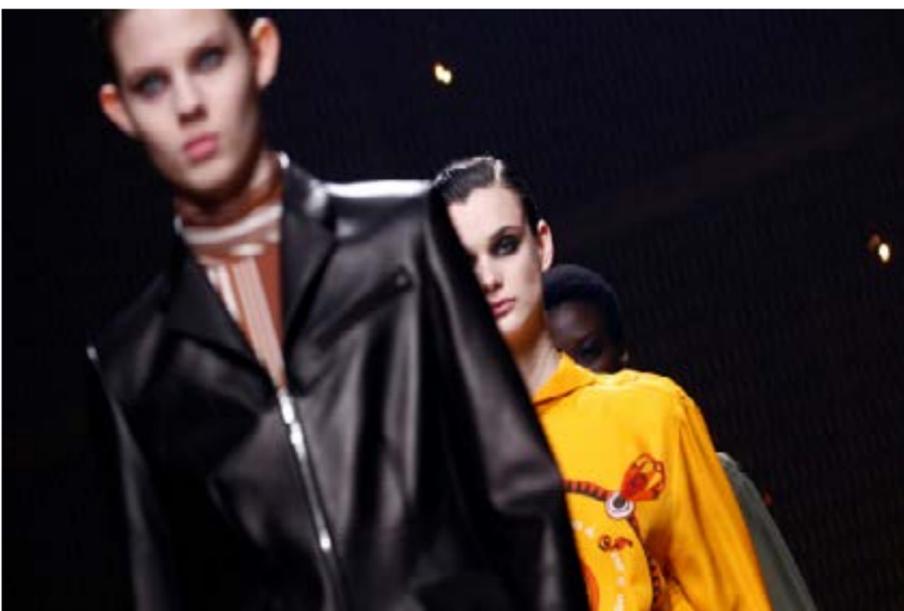
Brazil's former President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva arrives at the headquarters where he is serving a prison sentence after attending the funeral of his 7-year-old grandson, in Curitiba



76th Venice Film Festival - Screening of the film "Marriage Story" in competition - Red carpet arrivals



Supporters watch as U.S. Presidential Candidate and Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders arrives for a rally in New York



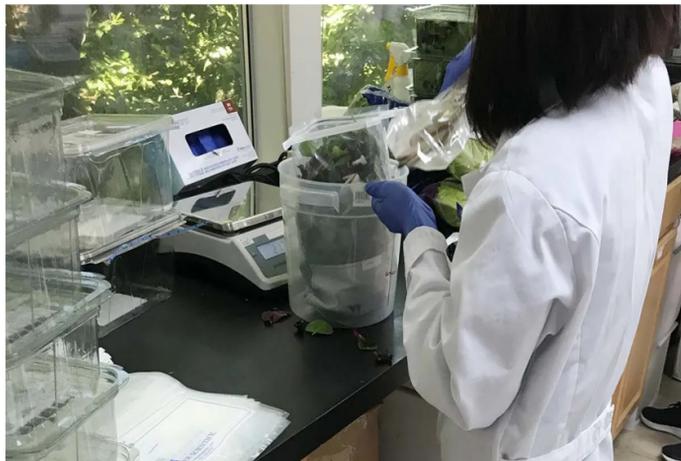
Models present creations by designer Nadege Vanhee-Cybulski as part of her Fall/Winter 2019-2020 women's ready-to-wear collection show for fashion house Hermes during Paris Fashion Week in Paris, France, REUTERS/Stephane Mahe



Spanish director Pedro Almodovar is presented with the Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement honour at the 76th Venice Film Festival in Venice

Consumer Reports Found The Bacteria In Prewashed And Unbagged Products

Leafy Greens With Listeria Sold at Major Supermarkets



A lab technician preparing samples in Consumer Reports' recent tests of leafy greens.

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

A new Consumer Reports test of 284 samples of fresh greens—such as lettuce, spinach, and kale—found six samples tainted with Listeria monocytogenes, a potentially deadly bacteria.



The supermarket industry has taken many steps to keep dangerous bacteria out of food, says Hilary Thesmar, Ph.D., senior vice president of food safety programs at the Food Marketing Institute.

“While it may not be surprising to find listeria in a small percentage of leafy green products that are tested, it is always concerning to find bacteria that can make people sick in foods that aren't meant to be cooked,” says Karen Wong, M.D., medical officer in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Enteric Diseases Epidemiology Branch.

CR's study represents a snapshot of the market and was not large enough to draw conclusions about the safety of specific brands or retailers. But the testing underscores that industry needs to do more to improve the safety of leafy greens.

leafy greens, including lettuce,” says James. E. Rogers, Ph.D., director of food safety research and testing at Consumer Reports. “The safest thing is to stick with greens you can cook.”

What CR's Tests Found

Of the six samples tainted with Listeria monocytogenes that were tested by CR purchased between June 3 and June 19, 2019 in Connecticut, New Jersey, and New York, one had a strain genetically linked to at least two cases of listeriosis (the illness caused by listeria) reported to the CDC.



CR's sample of Nature's Place Organic Spinach Spring Mix contained a strain of listeria that is genetically linked to two illnesses reported to the CDC.

CR's Findings Trigger FDA Inspection CR immediately informed the Food and Drug Administration and the CDC of our test results. We also contacted the companies that marketed the greens and the retailers where we purchased them.



In response to CR's findings, the FDA initiated an inspection of the plant that produced Nature's Place Organic Spinach Spring Mix, the product that contained a strain of listeria linked to two

illnesses. “We continue to look at the data provided by Consumer Reports. The FDA takes the presence of harmful pathogens in our food supply very seriously and considers the risk to public health when taking action.”

While CR applauds the FDA's inspection of the Nature's Place plant, the agency should take other steps, too, Rogers says. “Given the severity of listeriosis, our hope is that the FDA follows up on all the samples we found and not just the one linked to illnesses, in keeping with the agency's zero tolerance policy,” he says.



Boskovich Farms, which produced the other sample of bagged spinach found to be contaminated with listeria, told CR that it hasn't received any reports of illness. It also said that when this lot of spinach was produced, inspections at the farm and at the processing plant showed no evidence of contamination.

The other retailers we contacted noted that food safety is their top priority and that consumers should wash unbagged leafy greens.

But washing may not remove all contaminants from fresh greens, according to CDC researchers and others in a recent article in the journal Emerging Infectious Diseases. “Washing is mainly helpful for getting rid of dirt and some pesticides, not bacteria,” says CR's Rogers. “Bacteria can adhere to the surface of the leaves, and get stuck in microscopic crevices.”

The Risks of Listeria

Listeria monocytogenes is different from other types of bacteria that cause

foodborne illness. “It's one of the very few bacteria that can actually grow under refrigerator temperatures. That's where we have extra trouble with listeria,” says Thesmar, at the Food Marketing Institute. In fact, she says, the cold, moist environments of refrigerators and food-processing facilities make ideal breeding grounds for the bacteria.

“Listeria primarily causes illness in pregnant women, newborns, older adults, and people with weakened immune systems.”



Symptoms of listeria infection can include a fever, muscle aches, headaches, and diarrhea or other gastrointestinal symptoms. If the infection spreads to the nervous system, it can also cause a stiff neck, confusion, loss of balance, and convulsions.

Where Listeria Is Found

Listeria is usually associated with deli meats, hot dogs, soft cheeses, and sprouts. But in recent years other types of foods have been linked to outbreaks of listeriosis, including leafy greens.

How to Stay Safe

While listeria is killed when it's exposed to high temperatures, leafy greens are risky because they are often eaten raw. The safest move is to stick with leafy greens that you cook. “If you cook greens until they are fully wilted, they're likely to have been heated enough to be safe,” Rogers says. That step is most important for people especially vulnerable to listeria infections. (Courtesy unsmereports.org)

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China Withholding Samples Of A Dangerous Flu Virus

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

For over a year, the Chinese government has withheld lab samples of a rapidly evolving influenza virus from the United States — specimens needed to develop vaccines and treatments, according to federal health officials.



Health workers culling chickens in Hong Kong in 2014 following an outbreak of avian flu. (Photo Getty Images)

Despite persistent requests from government officials and research institutions, China has not provided samples of the dangerous virus, a type of bird flu called H7N9. In the past, such exchanges have been mostly routine under rules established by the World Health Organization.

Now, as the United States and China spar over trade, some scientists worry that the vital exchange of medical supplies and information could slow, hampering preparedness for the next biological threat.

The scenario is "unlike shortages in aluminum and soybeans," said Dr. Michael Callahan, an infectious disease specialist at Harvard Medical School.

"Jeopardizing U.S. access to foreign pathogens and therapies to counter them undermines our nation's ability to protect against infections which can spread globally within days."

Experts concur that the world's next global pandemic will likely come from a repeat offender: the flu. The H7N9 virus is one candidate.

Since taking root in China in 2013, the virus has spread through poultry farms, evolving into a highly pathogenic strain that can infect humans. It has killed 40 percent of its victims.

If this strain were to become highly contagious among humans, seasonal flu vaccines would provide little to no protection. Americans have virtually no immunity.

"Pandemic influenza spreads faster than anything else," said Rick A. Bright, the di-

rector of Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority, an agency within the Department of Health and Human Services that oversees vaccine development. "There's nothing to hold it back or slow it down. Every minute counts."



Blood samples infected with Flu virus.

Under an agreement established by the World Health Organization, participating countries must transfer influenza samples with pandemic potential to designated research centers "in a timely manner."

That process — involving paperwork, approval through several agencies and a licensed carrier — normally takes several months, according to Dr. Larry Kerr, the director of pandemics and emerging threats at the Department of Health and Human Services.

But more than one year after a devastating wave of H7N9 infections in Asia — 766 cases were reported, almost all in China — the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is still waiting for several viral samples, the National Security Council and the W.H.O. confirmed.

Scientists at the Department of Agriculture have had such difficulty obtaining flu samples from China that they have stopped requesting them altogether, according to a government official who spoke anonymously because he was not authorized to discuss the matter.

The Chinese embassy in Washington did not respond to multiple requests for comment. The Chinese Center For Disease Control and Prevention also did not reply to inquiries regarding the transfer.

When the H7N9 virus first appeared in China, researchers say the Chinese government at first provided timely informa-

tion. But communication has gradually worsened.



Health workers attending to an H7N9 avian flu patient in Wuhan, China, in 2017. At least four research institutions have relied upon a small group of H7N9 samples from cases in Taiwan and Hong Kong. (All four asked not to be identified for fear of further straining ties.) (Photo/ Getty Images)

Yet a sudden spike in infections during the 2016-2017 outbreak wave demands intense research, said scientists aiming to understand the virus' evolution.

Recent trade tensions could worsen the problem.

The Office of the United States Trade Representative in April released a proposed list of products to be targeted for tariffs — including pharmaceutical products such as vaccines, medicines and medical devices.

So far, none of those medical products have landed on the final tariff lists. But lower-level trade negotiations with China concluded on Thursday with few signs of progress, increasing the likelihood of additional tariffs.

Did The 1918 Flu Pandemic That Killed 50 Million Originate in China?

A National Geographic article* claims that the Spanish Flu came from China and spread to Canada and then Europe. According to the story presented here, Chinese workers carried the disease to the Western Front during World War I. Go here for article: *(https://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2014/01/140123-spanish-flu-1918-china-origins-pandemic-science-health/)

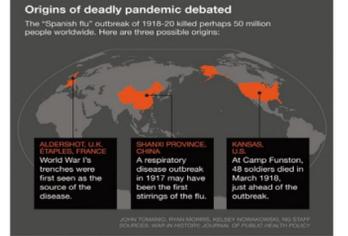
its research private. Some provinces withheld information about cases even from the central government in Beijing.

In 2005, Chinese authorities insisted an H5N1 influenza outbreak was contained, contradicting University of Hong Kong scientists who offered evidence that it was expanding. Those authorities hesitated to share viral samples from infected wild birds with the international community, concealing the scope to avoid a hit to their vast poultry industry.

Indonesia followed suit, refusing in 2007 to share specimens of H5N1 with the United States and United Kingdom, arguing that the countries would use the samples to develop a vaccine that Indonesians could not afford.

Those episodes led to the 2011 development of the W.H.O.'s Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Framework, which aims to promote sample exchanges as well as developing countries' access to vaccines.

But for countries like China, bearing the burden of a novel virus is paradoxical. Outbreaks are expensive — the wave of H7N9 infections in 2013 alone cost China more than \$6 billion, according to the United Nations — but they can provide a head-start in developing valuable treatments.



"In a sense, China has made lemonade from lemons — converting the problem of global infectious disease threats into lifesaving and valuable commodities," Dr. Callahan said.

And now, as the H7N9 virus evolves, United States authorities worry that the Chinese have obfuscated the scale and features of this outbreak.

The Chinese government has refused to share clinical data from infected patients, according to scientists, and claims to have all but eradicated H7N9 through a single poultry vaccination campaign.

"Influenza is going to do what it does best, which is mutate," Dr. Kerr said. (Courtesy New York Times)

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