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Russia, China, Iran sought to influence U.S. 2018 elections: U.S. spy chief



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# Southern DAILY

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## Planned drawdown in Afghanistan imperils U.S. push for peace

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - U.S. President Donald Trump will upend his own strategy to bring peace to Afghanistan and end America's longest war if he proceeds with plans to withdraw about half of the 14,000 U.S. troops there, according to veteran diplomats and U.S. officials.

A drawdown also will deal a fresh blow to allies' trust in the United States and give new room to militant groups al Qaeda and Islamic State in which to operate and plot attacks, they said.

"Barring some unforeseen details that have yet to come out, there is no way I can objectively look at this and see this as beneficial," said Jason Campbell, who was the Afghanistan country director at the Pentagon until September.

U.S. officials told Reuters that Trump has issued verbal orders to plan for a drawdown of close to 7,000 U.S. troops. But, they cautioned, he could always reverse course.

The White House and the Pentagon have not yet commented publicly. Word of Trump's decision followed a two-day meeting in Abu Dhabi earlier this week between U.S. special peace envoy Zalmay Khalilzad and Taliban representatives at which the sides discussed a withdrawal of international forces and a ceasefire in 2019.

If a U.S. drawdown goes ahead, "We just gave them half of what they wanted in all of this. Their top priority is for the United States to leave Afghanistan," said Campbell, now an analyst with the RAND Corp think tank.

Trump unveiled a South Asia strategy in August 2017 calling for an open-ended deployment of U.S. forces with the goal of compelling the Taliban to negotiate peace with the Kabul government.

But with the insurgents controlling large swaths of territory and chronically understrength Afghan forces suffering thousands of casualties a month, even a partial U.S. withdrawal reduces pressure on the Taliban to strike a deal, the experts and officials said. It also threatens to erode Afghan troops' willingness to fight.

Richard Olson, a former U.S. special envoy to Afghanistan and Pakistan, said that Trump's plan severely weakened Khalilzad's negotiating hand.



FILE PHOTO: A U.S. Army crew chief flying on board a Chinook helicopter observes the successful test of flares during a training flight in Afghanistan

"It's easier for them (the Taliban) to envision waiting us out," he said. Late last year, Trump reluctantly agreed to deploying thousands of additional U.S. troops.

The United States has about 14,000 troops in Afghanistan as part of a NATO-led mission, known as Resolute Support, and a U.S. counter-terrorism mission

largely directed against groups such as Islamic State and al Qaeda. Some 8,000 troops from 38 other countries are participating in Resolute Support.

The planned drawdown, according to a Pentagon adviser who spoke on the condition of anonymity, blindsided top U.S. military and allied commanders.

## JD.com CEO will not face assault charges in Minnesota

(Reuters) - Minnesota prosecutors will not charge the billionaire chief executive officer of China's JD.com Inc, Richard Liu, after he was accused of rape by a University of Minnesota student during a recent U.S. visit, authorities said on Friday.

In a statement, Freeman said that after an investigation by Minneapolis police and a review by four senior sexual assault prosecutors, it was clear his office could not meet its burden of proof, and therefore could not bring charges.

"Because we do not want to re-victimize the young woman, we will not be going into detail," Freeman said.

The 45-year-old Liu, who grew JD.com from a humble electronics stall to an e-commerce giant with 2017 net revenues of \$55.7 billion and maintains tight control of the company, was released without charge about 17 hours after he was arrested on Aug. 31. He quickly returned to China, where he has continued to run the company. His representatives have maintained his innocence after the woman from China studying at the University of Minnesota accused him of rape.

JD.com shares extended gains on Friday after news spread of the decision not to prosecute, and closed up 5.9 percent.

The case has attracted extreme interest in China. Liu could have faced up to 30 years in prison under Minnesota law if convicted of first-degree criminal sexual misconduct.

On Friday, Freeman said the three months it took his office to review Liu's case was not unusual for a sexual assault investigation, especially one in which no one was in custody.

"It had nothing to do with Liu's status as a wealthy, foreign businessman," Freeman said in his statement.

A lawyer for the student who accused Liu blasted Friday's decision, saying it showed why victims of sexual assault feared coming forward, and questioning why prosecutors waited to issue a release until late on the Friday before the Christmas holiday.

The investigators "never met this victim; they never spoke to this victim; they never sought to meet with her lawyers," the attorney, Wil Florin, said in a state-



ment. "Her story will be told. On her behalf we will not permit her dignity to be simply swept under the rug." The Hennepin County Attorney's Office did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Florin's statement.

An attorney for Liu said they welcomed the decision, and hoped that it would dispel "misinformation and speculation" that circulated widely since the billionaire's arrest. "Mr. Liu was arrested based on a false claim, and after a thorough investigation, with which he fully cooperated,

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**Patty Yu**  
Business Development

# Russia, China, Iran sought to influence U.S. 2018 elections: U.S. spy chief

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - Foreign powers, including Russia, China and Iran, sought to influence voters in the U.S. 2018 mid-term elections, but there is no evidence of any penetration into U.S. voting systems, the top U.S. intelligence official said on Friday.

U.S. Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats added that the intelligence community did not assess the impact of the foreign influence efforts on the election results.

The findings were included in a report that Coats submitted to U.S. President Donald Trump and U.S. agencies involved in election security as required by an executive order signed by Trump in September.

The order declared election interference a national emergency in the wake of an intelligence assessment that Russia conducted an influence operation to sway the 2016 presidential vote to Trump over his Democratic challenger Hillary Clinton. Russia denies that it interfered in the 2016 contest.

“At this time, the intelligence community does not have intelligence reporting that indicates any compromise of our nation’s election infrastructure that would have prevented voting, changed vote counts or disrupted the ability to tally votes,” Coats said in a statement on the 2018 election report.

“The activity we did see was consistent with what we shared in the weeks leading up to the election,” he continued. “Russia, and other foreign countries, including China and Iran, conducted influence activities and messaging campaigns targeted at the United States to promote their strategic interests.”

Coats did not elaborate on details of the foreign influence operations, and he said that the intelligence community did not assess their impact on voters who last month elected a new U.S. Congress, state legislatures, governors and other officials.

The Russians did not go away after the 2016 election,” Mark-Warner, the senior Democrat on the Senate Intelligence Committee, said in a statement on the new report.

“Now that the Russian playbook is out in the open, we’re going to see more and more adversaries trying to take advantage of the openness of our society to sow division and attempt to manipulate Americans,” Warner added.



FILE PHOTO: Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats arrives for a closed senators-only Capitol Hill briefing on election security at the U.S. Capitol in Washington



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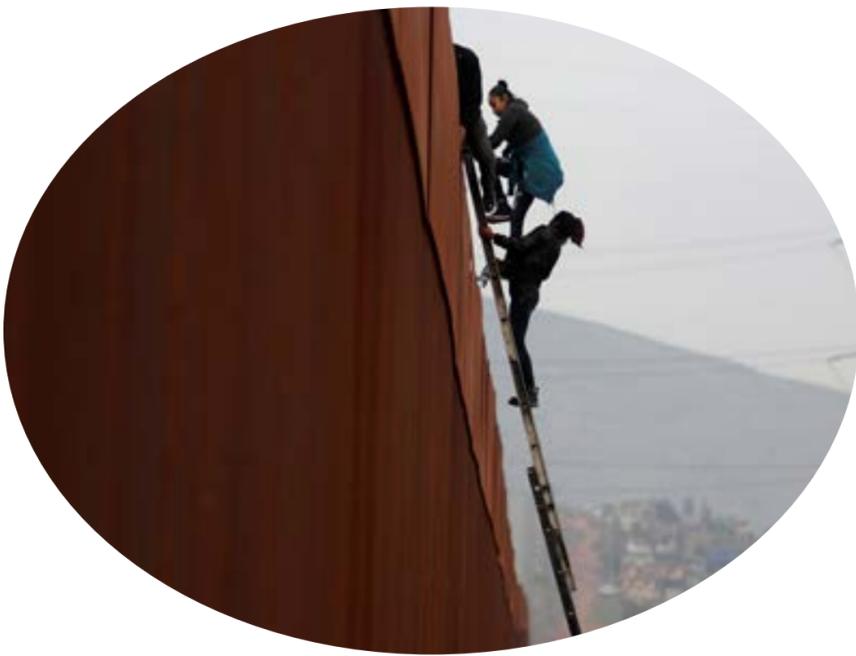
# Editor's Choice



FILE PHOTO: JD.com founder Richard Liu attends a business forum in Hong Kong



A general view of the skyline as the air quality worsen in Bangkok



Migrants from Honduras, part of a caravan of thousands from Central America trying to reach the United States, climb a border fence to cross illegally from Mexico to the U.S., in Tijuana,



Alba, the world's only-known albino orangutan, leaves a cage as it is released back into the wild by the wildlife conservation group Borneo Orangutan Survival Foundation (BOSF) at Bukit Baka Bukit Raya National Park in Katingan, Central Kalimantan province



FILE PHOTO: FBI agent Bishop appears in a booking photo in Denver



Former New England Compounding Center supervisory pharmacist Glenn Chin enters the federal court in Boston



Rep. Mark Meadows (R-NC) speaks to reporters during on going negotiations over budget legislation to avert a potential federal government shutdown on Capitol Hill in Washington Please contact your account representative for further details.



REFILE - CORRECTING BYLINE Demonstrators hold up flares during a protest against a proposed new labor law, billed as the "slave law", at the Presidential Palace in Budapest, Hungary December 21, 2018. REUTERS/Bernadett Szabo

If you thought December 25 marked the end of the winter shopping season, you're definitely mistaken. After Christmas sales have exploded in recent years, providing yet another opportunity to score awesome deals before the year is over. Despite the moniker, we actually saw sales begin on December 21 last year. Neiman Marcus led the pack with free overnight shipping — which meant you could get your After Christmas goodies before Christmas Day. That said, in 2018 the bulk of the After Christmas sales will fall between December 26 and New Year's Eve.

Here are the best things to buy during After Christmas sales.

**Clothing**

Clothing deals tend to dominate After Christmas sales. Last year, about 55% of the post-holiday deals we saw were for clothing and accessories. Even better, these sales often matched Black Friday and Cyber Monday sales — if not outright beating them.



For example, last year Men's Wearhouse took an extra 60% off clearance, tying as the strongest general clearance sale we'd seen from the clothier all year. Additionally, Banana Republic and Kate Spade hosted their best extra discounts of the year. They took an extra 60% and 40% off, respectively.

*Last year, about 55% of the After Christmas deals we saw were for clothing and accessories.*

Be sure to look out for clearance clothes, which are sure to have incredibly steep discounts. Last year, New York & Company had an excellent buy one, get three free offer on clearance items.

For its part, Jos. A. Bank offered a scarf and hat set for only \$7. The menswear retailer also had polos for only \$6, while American Eagle Outfitters had reversible beanies for \$4.

**On December 26th, You Can Shop Last-Minute Deals On Clothing, Holiday Decor, And Video Games**

**What to Expect From After Christmas Sales 2018**

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



**Holiday Decor**

If you want to be the most impressively decorated house on the block, you'll need to plan for next year. Set a reminder to spend December 26 stocking up on everything from holiday lights to inflatable snowmen, and from pre-lit Christmas trees to sparkly tree toppers. Of course, there's a chance that these items could hit sale shelves just before Christmas, too.

Last year, Lowe's kicked off a Christmas clearance sale a couple of days before the holiday, offering shoppers the chance to grab last-minute decor for cheap.

However, buying decorations right before Christmas means you won't be able to leave them up long, unless you prefer to

leave your house decorated year-round. So why not wait a few more days for the really good sales? Last year, Home Depot kicked off its sale on December 30 and took 50% to 75% off Christmas trees, lighting, and other decor. Shopping sales like that means you can deck the halls with savings in 2019, while everyone else is paying full price.



**Exercise Equipment**

Last year, about 21% of the fitness deals we listed were Editors' Choice picks. That might not sound like much, but they're definitely worth checking out (especially if you have a certain New Year's resolution on your list).

REI was one retailer to watch last year, as it took 50% off apparel and gear right after Christmas Day. And if you were interested in outlet shopping, REI Garage took an extra 25% off one item. Additionally, check for item-specific discounts — in 2017, we saw weight sets drop to \$15.

**Video Games**

If you didn't find the video game deals you wanted before Christmas, you're in luck! Last year, nearly 50% of the video game deals we saw during After Christmas sales were Editors' Choice-worthy. They included titles like Fallout 4 for only \$8, and an Xbox One X bundle that was \$108 cheaper than buying the items separately.



*Last year, nearly 50% of the video game deals we saw during After Christmas sales were Editors' Choice-worthy.*

Prefer PC gaming? Look for the Steam Winter Sale to kick off sometime around December 20. Since this promotion lasts longer than the Autumn Sale, you should have more of a chance to grab all the titles on your wishlist. Amazon tends to drop game prices, too.

And if you prefer console gaming, be sure to check out GameStop's sale. Typically that retailer hosts a buy two, get one free sale on used items.

**Electronics**

You won't find a ton of Editors' Choice deals on electronics post-Christmas — in fact, only about 13% of the deals we saw last year earned our best-of-the-best designation. However, it's still worth checking them out! It's possible you'll find an unbeatable deal on a gadget or device you've been eyeing. TVs and headphones will be popular items for deals, with a wide variety of prices and types on sale.



In 2017, we saw a Samsung 55" smart set that beat its Cyber Monday price by \$99 and an LG 43" smart TV bundled with a \$100 gift card for \$330. We also saw Klipsch earbuds drop to the lowest price we'd seen.

We also expect to see a few Amazon device bundles. Last year, a second-generation Dot and Fire TV Stick were sold together for \$60 during the After Christmas sales. If you don't mind refurbished products, you can usually find a slew of deals, including TVs and headphones. You should also keep an eye out for Canon's refurbished sale, which tends to take an extra 15% off select items. (Courtesy <https://www.dealnews.com>)

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One-third of the 6,000 migrants residing in Tijuana are being treated for health issues, the city's health department says; Griff Jenkins details the report. Migrants who came with the caravan are suffering from respiratory infections, tuberculosis, chickenpox and other serious health issues, Tijuana's Health Department warned on Thursday morning. The spokesman told Fox News that out of 6,000 migrants currently residing in the city, over a third of them (2,267) are being treated for health-related issues. There are three confirmed cases of tuberculosis, four cases of HIV/AIDS and four separate cases of chickenpox, the spokesman said. At least 101 migrants have lice and multiple instances of skin infections, the department's data shows. There's also a threat of Hepatitis outbreak due to unsanitary conditions, the spokesman said. The thousands of migrants are being sheltered at the Benito Juarez Sports Complex near the San Ysidro U.S.-Mexico Port of Entry, despite the place being capable of providing for 1,000 people.



The location also has only 35 portable bathrooms. A sign reading "No Spitting" was put up, as coughing and spitting by migrants are rampant in the shelter. Tijuana Mayor Juan Manuel Gastelum said Tuesday that the city has enough money to assist the migrants only for a few more days, with the city saying it's spending around \$30,000 a day. "We won't compromise the resources of the residents of Tijuana," Gastelum said during a press conference. "We won't raise taxes tomorrow to pay for today's problem." Amid the problems and dire living conditions, some migrants are reportedly self-deporting. Approximately 80 self-deported Tuesday while another

One-Third Of Migrants In Caravan Are Being Treated For Health Issues Including "Multiple Cases Of Tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, Chickenpox, Lice And Skin Infections." -- Tijuana Health Official

Migrants In Caravan Plagued With Serious Health Issues

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



98 were deported by Mexican immigration officials for their involvement in Sunday's demonstrations that turned violent. Others have chosen to accept offers of temporary work and asylum from Mexico, yet most still remain committed to entering the U.S. (Courtesy Fox News)

Related

Some migrant caravan members self-deporting as frustration grows in Tijuana



TIJUANA - At a little after 4 a.m. last Wednesday morning, a large white truck pulled up to the Benito Juarez Sports Complex in Tijuana as 57 new migrants climb out to join the more than 6,000 being sheltered here near the San Ysidro U.S.-Mexico Port of Entry. That's in addition to the more 2,000 in nearby Mexicali who are expected to make their way toward Tijuana this week, according to local officials. At present, officials say the total number of migrants in Tijuana alone break down this way: 6,062 total, comprising of 3,877 men, 1,127 women and 1,058 children. These migrants are tired, restless and growing frustrated by the reality that it's proving much more difficult to get

across the border than they had anticipated. And the journey, which began for most of them in Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador, is also taking a physical toll. Local health officials said that more than half of them are suffering from respiratory conditions - and walking between the jam-packed tents, a cacophony of coughing can be heard day and night.



But yet more are arriving every day, and Tijuana's local government is bearing the cost of it all. "We need help. This is very costly," said Delegate Genaro Lopez Moreno. "This is costing us \$30,000 to \$40,000 dollars a day to keep these people here and all those funds have to come from some place - and it is municipal funds." Now, the fear among Tijuana residents is that a protracted situation could ultimately lead to higher taxes to pay for it all. Delegate Moreno also lays much of the blame on the caravan organizers who he believes sold the migrants a lot of false hope. "The leaders that were promising them the great American Dream aren't coming through," Moreno said, adding, "they know they're going to be better off going back home." And some have left. Approximately 80 self-deported Tuesday while another 98 were deported by Mexican immigration officials for their involvement in Sunday's demonstrations that turned violent.



Others have chosen to accept offers of temporary work and asylum from Mexico. But most are committed to the original goal as the prospects for asylum in the U.S. grows dimmer. Some migrants, like Luis Conde from Guatemala, vow to cross the border regardless - legally, or not. "It doesn't matter," Conde said. "I got no choice. I got to work for a living." (Courtesy https://www.foxnews.com)

Advertisement for '雲天燒腊麵食家' (Yun Tian BBQ Noodle House). Features a menu with items like '京都肉排', '葱油鯧魚', '北菇雞', etc., and contact information: (713) 988-5745, 9380 Bellaire Blvd, Houston, TX 77036.

Advertisement for '中美酒樓' (Chinese American Restaurant). Features a menu with items like '四人份', '八人份', '十人份', etc., and contact information: 281-498-1280, 11317 Bissonnet, Houston, TX 77099.

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