

## Trump turns to U.S. Supreme Court as last chance to keep his finances secret

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - President Donald Trump on Thursday asked the U.S. Supreme Court to keep his financial records out of the hands of a Democratic-led congressional panel, setting up a major clash between branches of government.

Trump turned to the justices after the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit decided on Nov. 13 that it would not revisit its October decision backing the House of Representatives Oversight Committee's authority to subpoena the records from Mazars LLP, Trump's longtime accounting firm.

The Supreme Court on Nov. 25 put that ruling on hold, giving Trump until Thursday to file his appeal.

The case represents an important showdown at the top U.S. court over the powers of the presidency versus those of Congress.

"This is a case of firsts. It is the first time that Congress has subpoenaed personal records of a sitting president," Trump's lawyers wrote.

The Republican president's lawyers say that the committee does not have authority to conduct what they describe as a law enforcement investigation.

The committee said it needs the records from Mazars to determine whether government disclosure laws need to be changed.

The lower court ruling, if left intact, would bring House Democrats closer to shedding light on Trump's business interests even as they pursue an impeachment inquiry against him focusing on his dealings with Ukraine.

Trump has already asked the Supreme Court to review a New York-based federal appeals court's



FILE PHOTO: U.S. President Donald Trump heads to the Marine One helicopter to depart the White House on his way to address the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) in Washington, U.S., February 23, 2018. REUTERS/Jim Bourg

ruling that local prosecutors can enforce a subpoena also issued to Mazars demanding Trump's personal and corporate tax returns from 2011 to 2018. The justices are due to discuss whether to hear that case at a meeting on Dec. 13.

In a third case, the New York-based appeals court on Tuesday directed Deutsche Bank AG (DBKGn.DE) and Capital One Financial Corp (COFN) to comply with subpoenas from congressional Democrats demanding similar material.

Trump's lawyers have said they would ask the Supreme Court to put a hold on that case as well. As the court already blocked the similar Mazars

ruling, it would likely grant that request.

The court has a 5-4 conservative majority that includes two Trump appointees: Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh.

Both Mazars cases are likely to be on a fast track, meaning that if the court decides to hear them, a ruling would be possible before the end of June, when its current term ends.

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# Editor's Choice



Women rights activists wearing masks take part in a protest opposing violence against women and against Chile's government in Santiago, Chile December 5, 2019. REUTERS/Ivan Alvarado



Women rights activists wearing masks and other people take part in a protest opposing violence against women and against Chile's government in Santiago, Chile December 5, 2019. REUTERS/Ivan Alvarado



U.S. President Donald Trump — with larger salt and pepper shakers than his guests — hosts a lunch for ambassadors to the U.N. Security Council at the White House in Washington



Democratic 2020 U.S. presidential candidate and former U.S. Vice President Joe Biden shakes hands with a man during a meet and greet on his "No Malarkey!" campaign bus tour at the Waverly Area Veterans Post in Waverly, Iowa



A man drinks a Frucola as a policeman chases demonstrators during a protest against Chile's government in Santiago



House Speaker Pelosi speaks about Trump impeachment inquiry on Capitol Hill in Washington



Demba, 8, a Koranic student, called a talibe, attends karate training in the courtyard of Maison de la Gare, an organisation that helps talibe street children reintegrate into society, in Saint-Louis, Senegal, February 8, 2019. "My older brother brought me to the daara in Saint-Louis to learn Koran. We don't eat at the daara, they send us to beg.



Afghan men light candles for Japanese doctor Tetsu Nakamura, who was killed in Jalalabad in yesterday's attack, in Kabul

The More Resources We Can Harness On The Red Planet, The Fewer We Need To Bring With Us

Almost Everything We Need To Live On Mars Is Already There



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

We continue to learn that Mars is rich with resources that could be vital to supporting astronauts on the Red Planet for any extended period of time.

This colonization strategy is the subject of an April 2016 NASA scientific and technical information (STI) paper titled "Frontier In-Situ Resource Utilization for Enabling Sustained Human Presence on Mars," which argues that the information we have gleaned from rovers and orbiters suggests that there is an abundance of useful resources already on Mars.

From the paper:

In recent years, measurements by rovers and satellites at Mars have indicated massive amounts of water in the form of ice beneath and within the regolith. At times, during the Martian year, liq-

uid water is observed on the surface of Mars. If the planet were flat and the ice melted, there would be an ocean many meters deep on the entire planet.



The tentative plan all starts with water. By sending in-situ resource utilization (ISRU) equipment to regions of Mars with subsurface water ice deposits, we could extract the water that is key to producing other materials.

Mineral resources are in abundance as well, including iron, titanium, nickel,

aluminum, sulfur, chlorine and calcium. "Clay-like minerals are also ubiquitous in the Martian surface soils, making the manufacturing of ceramics for pottery and similar purposes a straightforward enterprise," reads the STI paper.

To protect Martian settlers from cosmic radiation and intense cold, the most logical thing to do is build habitats underground, ultimately filling the caverns with inflatable habitat modules.



Food could also be produced on Mars in a "protected atmospheric environment using sunlight," or possibly using an artificial light source. "Earth independence requires that the astronauts grow their own food or that the food be grown for them robotically.

If this all sounds familiar that is because,

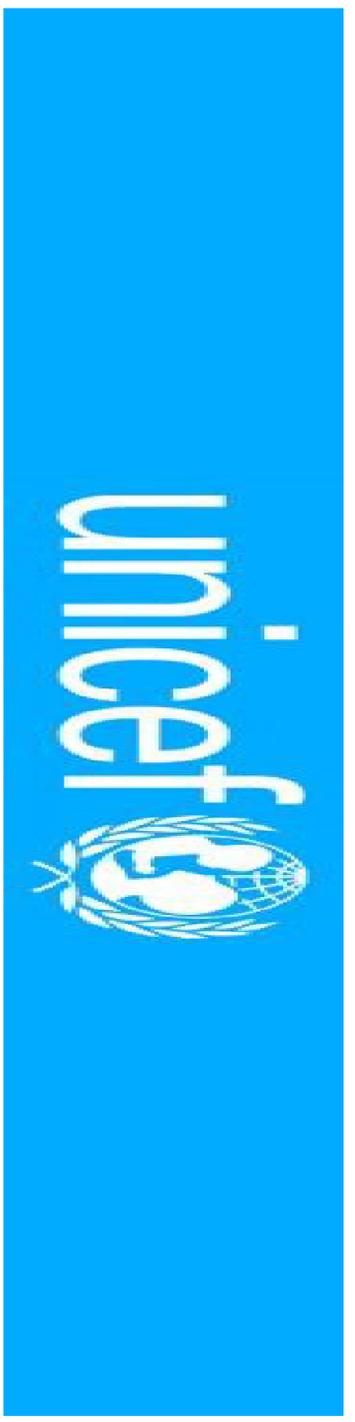
yes, this is pretty much exactly how it all goes down in Kim Stanley Robinson's Red Mars.

To actually realize a Martian outpost anything like what is outlined in the STI paper (and/or Red Mars), we would rely on advances in robotics technology and automated systems. Basically, we would need to send robots to start building our Martian settlement for us before we arrive, and continue to maintain the habitat, food-production systems, and other equipment.



We are starting to scratch the surface of developing robotic systems that could break ground on our new Martian home. A prototype instrument called Moxie will be included on the Mars 2020 rover for extracting oxygen from the Martian atmosphere.

The point is, the resources we need are already there waiting for us. We just need to figure out how to use them. (Courtesy/ NASA via Aviation Week)



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TOKYO/HIGASHI MATSUSHIMA, JAPAN (Reuters) - A northern Japanese city's efforts to rebuild its electric power system after the 2011 earthquake and tsunami mark a quiet shift away from the country's old utility model toward self-reliant, local generation and transmission.

After losing three-quarters of its homes and 1,100 people in the March 2011 temblor and tsunami, the city of Higashi Matsushima turned to the Japanese government's "National Resilience Program," with 3.72 trillion yen (\$33.32 billion) in funding for this fiscal year, to rebuild.

The city of 40,000 chose to construct micro-grids and de-centralized renewable power generation to create a self-sustaining system capable of producing an average of 25 percent of its electricity without the need of the region's local power utility.



The city's steps illustrate a massive yet little known effort to take dozens of Japan's towns and communities off the power grid and make them partly self-sufficient in generating electricity. "At the time of the Great East Japan earthquake, we couldn't secure power and had to go through incredible hardships," said Yusuke Atsumi, a manager at HOPE, the utility Higashi Matsushima created to manage the local generation and grid.

Under a large-scale power system a "blackout at one area would lead to wide-scale power outages. But the independent distributed micro-grid can sustain power even if the surrounding area is having a blackout."

The Resilience Program is mainly for building back-up capabilities for Japan's cities and towns in the event of another

## Quiet Energy Revolution Is Underway In Japan As Dozens Of Towns Go Off The Grid



Higashi-Matsushima city major Hideo Abe shows off pictures of the city's reconstructing plan after March 11, 2011 earthquake and tsunami disaster, at the city government office in Higashi-Matsushima, northern Japan, February 22, 2017. (Photo/REUTERS)

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

er disaster such as the earthquake and tsunami that caused meltdowns at the Fukushima nuclear power plant. However, the Program has spurred the creation of micro-grids and distributed power generation across Japan that reduces municipalities dependence on large power plants.



Japan's government ministries are seeking to raise the budget for the Program by another 24 percent for the fiscal year starting in April 2018, the cabinet office said last month.

The money earmarked for this fiscal year is going in part to the creation of smart energy management systems and distributed generation systems in towns across Japan.

"Since Fukushima, there has been a gradual elaboration of policies to realize that kind of local autonomy, local consumption paradigm," said Andrew Dewit, a professor of energy policy at Rikkyo University in Tokyo.



Distributed generation uses small-scale power generation fueled by natural gas or solar and wind power arrays. Smart energy systems use the internet to connect appliances and meters to better direct electric power where and when its needed.

Higashi Matsushima has built its own independent transmission grid and solar generating panels as well as batteries to store power that can keep the city running for at least three days, according to Atsumi.

Companies in Japan are shifting their focus in response to the changes heralded by cities like Higashi Matsushima.

Sekisui House (1928.T), Japan's biggest builder of detached homes, constructed Higashi Matsushima's smart micro-grid for 85 housing units in 2016.

Taisei Corp (1801.T), one of Japan's biggest construction companies, set up an energy strategy division this year to take

advantage of the drive for smart energy systems.

The company is planning to double energy-related orders to around 120 billion yen over the next five years, focusing on renewables, energy efficient buildings and smart communities, a spokesman said.



Steps taken by cities like Higashi Matsushima were the brainchild of Takao Kashiwagi, a professor at the International Research Centre for Advanced Energy Systems for Sustainability at the Tokyo Institute of Technology.

He designed Japan's first smart town and is the head of the New Energy Promotion Council that has paid out more than 100 billion yen in subsidies from the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry for smart energy communities.

"We are moving towards a day when we won't be building large-scale power plants. Instead, we will have distributed power systems, where small power supply systems are in place near the consumption areas," he said. (Courtesy <https://www.reuters.com/>)



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