

Bout Computer Contents Shown to U.S. Jury

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NEW YORK — Prosecutors have presented to a New York jury evidence they say shows that Viktor Bout, a former Soviet officer labeled the Merchant of Death, researched an anti-American rebel group before being arrested on charges that he agreed to sell it weapons.

The contents of Bout's computer were displayed Monday on a large screen before the jury in a U.S. federal court in Manhattan.

A computer forensics expert testified that Bout researched the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC, in the days before he went from Russia to Thailand to meet men he thought belonged to the group. The men were Drug Enforcement Administration operatives.

Bout was arrested in 2008 after the Bangkok hotel meeting. He was transferred to the United States last year for trial. He has pleaded not guilty and says he is a legitimate businessman.

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