

German Arrested for Spying for Russia

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August 13, 2012



A C-130 Hercules flies over the air traffic control tower at the U.S. Air Force-run Ramstein Air Base.

A civilian NATO employee arrested in Germany last week on spying charges was working for Russian intelligence, a news report said Monday.

The employee at Ramstein Air Base, identified only as Manfred K., downloaded tactical plans for U.S. operations worldwide as well as secret computer passwords for military top brass, the Times of London reported.

The material was so good that the Federal Security Service, or FSB, was prepared to offer £7 million (\$11 million) in cash, the report said, quoting a “senior security journalist in Germany.”

Ramstein is home to both a U.S. air base and a NATO command center.

It was unclear, however, why the FSB would be involved in the case. Unlike the Foreign and the Military Intelligence services, it runs no overseas operations. None of the agencies

commented on the report Monday.

The Times' report resembled a story published by German weekly Focus last weekend that said the suspected spy was motivated by frustration with his U.S. superiors.

Both reports said the man had been downloading sensitive data for years, an allegation that German officials denied on Monday.

"The suspect was arrested shortly after the downloading happened," Marcus Köhler, a spokesman for federal prosecutors, said by telephone from Karlsruhe on Monday. He refused to elaborate.

Prosecutors said in an Aug. 7 statement that the 60-year-old suspect was arrested for illegally copying secret information to his private computer in order to hand it over to "a third party." The [statement](#) did not say who the information was intended for.

The Times' report also said NATO is considering banning all civilian employees from accessing top-secret material.

Reached by telephone in Brussels, a NATO spokesman said Monday that the alliance does not comment on intelligence matters.

If confirmed, the case would be the latest in a series of spy scandals involving Russian intelligence. Last fall, German police arrested a married couple in Marburg who are suspected of acting as illegal sleeper agents similar to the group, including Anna Chapman, that was uncovered in the United States in 2010.

The suspects, Andreas and Heidrun Anschlag, had formerly lived in Landau, not far from Ramstein. They are still in pretrial detention.

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