

Russian Caught Smuggling Military Goggles Sentenced to 18 Months in U.S. Prison

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A Muscovite was sentenced to 18 months in prison for conspiring to smuggle cutting-edge military night-vision technology to Russia.

A district court in Delaware has sentenced a Russian man to more than a year behind bars for trying to smuggle military-grade night-vision equipment to Russia, a news report said.

Delawareonline.com said Wednesday that Dmitry Ustinov had been sentenced to a prison sentence of 18 months for attempting to bring into Russia equipment supposedly intended for his hunting shop in Moscow.

But the cutting-edge night-vision scopes, used by the U.S. military, can also be mounted on drones on weapons and are banned from export without a federal license.

Ustinov, 53, was detained last year in Lithuania and extradited to the U.S., where he pleaded guilty to the charges in July, according to the U.S. Department of Justice.

Investigators said he tried to get at least 17 military-grade scopes out of United States between 2010 and 2013.

Ustinov used fake companies, listed Cyprus as a false destination for the shipments, or simply tried to conceal the smuggled devices in used car parts.

He will be deported to Russia after serving his sentence, the report said.

The incident has irked the Russian Foreign Ministry, which has long accused the U.S. of orchestrating a witch hunt on Russian citizens worldwide by detaining them on allegedly flimsy pretexts.

The best-known case of the kind is that of Viktor Bout, extradited to the U.S. from Thailand in 2010 and convicted in 2011 of running an arms smuggling empire.

Bout has denied the charges, and has dismissed theories he could not have run his sophisticated operation without help from the Kremlin.

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