

Court Marshals Break Into Home Over Nemtsov Loan

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In a rare reversal, authorities acted to protect the interests of an opposition leader Tuesday as court marshals broke into the apartment of the former director of a state arms exporter to collect \$700,000 owed to liberal politician Boris Nemtsov.

Furniture, office equipment and jewelry were found in the apartment in southwestern Moscow owned by Alexander Kotyolkin, who headed the now-defunct Rossvooruzheniye in the 1990s, but the total value of seized property amounted to only 41,500 rubles (\$1,350), the Federal Court Marshals Service said on its web site.

Last year, Moscow's Nikulinsky District Court formally ordered Kotyolkin to return the funds borrowed from Nemtsov in 2008 but never repaid.

Kotyolkin was not present in the apartment, and his wife and son refused to open the door to court marshals, prompting them to break open the door. Now Kotyolkin's relatives have 10

days to prove that the seized property belongs to them, not Kotyolkin, or it will be auctioned off.

Nemtsov, a deputy prime minister under President Boris Yeltsin in the 1990s, said by telephone Tuesday that the court marshals were “doing their duty.”

“In 2008, he asked me to lend him money to invest in some projects, and I reluctantly lent it to him. He declined to return the money,” said Nemtsov, who added that he earned the money by investing in the Russian stock market.

Nemtsov said he was friends with Kotyolkin. “We went to the banya together, and you know what that means for a man in Russia.”

He said Kotyolkin “is not a poor man” and is able to repay the debt.

Kotyolkin, who is currently working as the head of two charity foundations supporting Orthodox monasteries, was unavailable for comment Tuesday.

Kotyolkin has left his post in Rossvooruzheniye in 1997 amid an embezzlement scandal. He was not personally implicated, but Yeltsin said at that time that Kotyolkin did not leave his post voluntarily. “Some problems have emerged under him,” Yeltsin said, without elaborating.

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