

U.S. Prosecutor Says Bout Wanted to Kill Americans

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NEW YORK — Russian businessman Viktor Bout was willing to sell "staggering quantities" of weapons and explosives to anti-American rebels to make millions of dollars, a U.S. prosecutor told jurors Wednesday as Bout's trial began.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Brendan McGuire pointed at Bout as he accused him of promising to deliver 100 surface-to-air missiles, 20,000 high-powered rifles and 10 million rounds of ammunition in a shipment of weapons destined for Colombia in 2008.

"This man, Viktor Bout, agreed to provide all of it to a foreign terrorist organization he believes was going to kill Americans," McGuire said in his opening statements.

Bout was brought to the United States last year from Thailand, where he was arrested in March 2008.

The prosecutor added that Bout did not know he was trapped in a Drug Enforcement Administration sting operation and that the two men he was dealing with were working for

the U.S. government.

He said Bout had the experience, the will and the means to deliver "staggering quantities of weapons and explosives" to the rebels.

"Why? For the money," McGuire said. He said prosecutors would play hours of taped conversations for jurors so they could hear Bout talking about the arms deal.

Given his turn before the jury, defense lawyer Albert Dayan said the government had it all wrong.

He told the jury that Bout was agreeing with whatever the DEA operatives were saying so that he could sell two transport planes for \$5 million. He said Bout lost his transport business and had turned to real estate when the U.S. operatives tried to trap him in a crime.

The trial judge warned jurors not to reveal on social media sites that they're on the case. She had them sign a pledge Tuesday not to research the case online.

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