

Soldier Charged With Espionage

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Prosecutors charged a former Russian serviceman with espionage Tuesday, accusing him of treason for selling secret maps to the U.S. Department of Defense.

Vladimir Lazar is accused of handing over copies of detailed topographical maps to an ex-colleague in Belarus who was actively collaborating with the U.S. intelligence services, the Prosecutor General's Office said in a statement on its website.

Lazar — who had worked for the army for almost 30 years in various positions and is still in the reserves — bought more than 7,000 maps from a collector in 2008 and copied them onto a disk to give to his friend, prosecutors said.

According to prosecutors, the maps contained state secrets, and "their transfer to military agencies of other countries could cause significant damage to the internal security of Russia" and allow "for the planning of potential military activities, including strikes by rockets and preparation for ground-based operations."

The FSB's investigative department first brought the charges, before sending the case to prosecutors for further examination. The case will now pass to the Moscow City Court.

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