

Moscow Says U.S. Favors Blackwater Over Bout

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The Foreign Ministry fired a new salvo at the United States over the Viktor Bout affair Tuesday, saying the U.S. government had no right to jail the Russian businessman for "conspiring" to sell arms but to only slap a fine on a U.S. company that actually broke the law with arms sales.

"The U.S. court system sentenced Russian citizen Viktor Bout to 25 years simply for 'conspiring' (and without proof) to sell weapons to Colombian rebels," the ministry said in a [statement](#).

"Blackwater has officially admitted to making illegal arms shipments to Iraq, Afghanistan and Sudan," it said. "Isn't this a clear manifestation of the double standards of American justice?"

U.S. court documents unsealed earlier this month showed that Academi, formerly Blackwater

Worldwide, agreed to pay a fine of \$7.5 million for illegally supplying weapons to the three countries and for engaging in other activities.

Bout, sought by the United States for years, was arrested in a 2008 sting operation in a Thai hotel and, despite a fierce protest by Russia, extradited to New York and convicted on charges of conspiracy to kill U.S. citizens late last year.

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