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Muscovite to Be Tried in U.S. on Arms Export Conspiracy Charges

By The Moscow Times

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The Aries MK 410 Spartan, part of the line of night vision weapon sights produced by the night vision and thermal imaging optics manufacturer.

U.S. authorities have charged a man from Moscow with trying to buy thermal-imaging rifle sights and export them to Russia without a license, a news report said.

Roman Kvinikadze, a 32-year-old Moscow resident, initially contacted a man he thought was a weapons company representative over the Internet to ask about buying thermal sights made by American Technologies Network, U.S. security agent Ramzi Aly said in a written statement to the court.

Kvinikadze and an unidentified Russian acquaintance then met with the contact, who turned out to be an undercover U.S. Department of Homeland Security agent posing as an arms sales representative, at a trade show for weapons and accessories manufacturers in Las Vegas, Aly testified, The Associated Press reported Monday.

The undercover agent told the men that the rifle sights were restricted for export, but that there were ways to ship them without a license, the statement said.

Kvinikadze and the undercover agent worked out a system to ship the weapons through Prague, the Czech Republic, according to Aly's statement. As a good-faith payment, Kvinikadze wired $1,000 to an undercover bank account in Cheyenne, Wyoming, and then traveled from Russia to Wyoming in June to inspect the sights and finalize the purchase, Aly said.

Kvinikadze was arrested during a meeting with undercover federal agents in Wyoming, his lawyer Ronald Pretty said.

Pretty said that his client planned to legally export the sights to Russia, where they would be sold mainly to hunters. "He didn't break the law in any way shape or form," he added.

Kvinikadze is to stand trial in February in Cheyenne and faces up to 25 years in prison if convicted of conspiracy to violate the Arms Export Control Act and attempting to export munitions without a license.

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