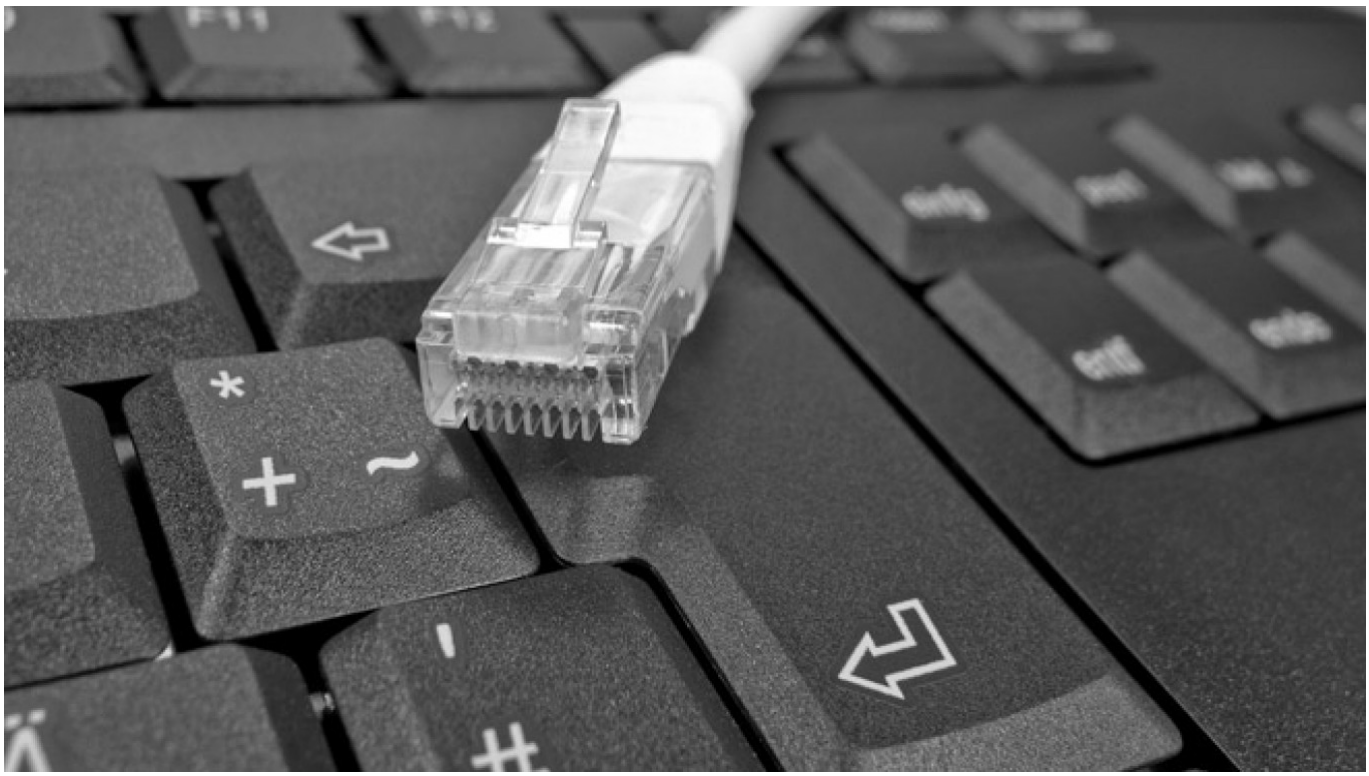
The Moscow Times
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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russia Blasts Netherlands for Extraditing Accused Hacker to U.S.

February 15, 2015



U.S. attorneys have called the case the largest hacking and data breach ever prosecuted in the United States.

Russia's Foreign Ministry slammed the Netherlands over its decision to extradite Russian national Vladimir Drinkman to stand trial in the U.S. on hacking charges.

"Washington continues its vicious practice of applying its laws extraterritorially," the Foreign Ministry's Special Representative for Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law Konstantin Dolgov said in a scathing statement issued Saturday.

Russians have often been forced to endure the bias and injustice of America's legal system, often with cases having been fabricated during the investigative stages, the statement said, adding that the U.S. guarantee of a presumption of innocence is routinely violated where Russian defendants are concerned.

Russian-U.S. relations have plunged to post-Cold War lows in recent months in connection with the ongoing crisis in east Ukraine and Russia's annexation of Crimea in March of last

year.

Drinkman is one of four Russians and a Ukrainian charged in New Jersey with a sophisticated hack that netted at least 160 million credit and debit card numbers.

Drinkman was arrested in the Netherlands in June 2012 and had been fighting extradition ever since.

U.S. attorneys have called the case the largest hacking and data breach ever prosecuted in the United States.

Dutch Justice Ministry spokeswoman Sentina van der Meer confirmed that Drinkman was flown out of the Netherlands on Friday, two weeks after a court rejected his final bid to prevent the extradition.

(MT, AP)

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https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2015/02/15/russia-blasts-netherlands-for-extraditing-accused-hacker-to-us-a43908