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Russia's Rosneft Cancels Order for $260 Teaspoons Amid Navalny Row

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A subsidiary of Russian oil giant Rosneft has canceled an order for luxury tableware amid a public row with Russian anti-corruption campaigner and politician Alexei Navalny.

RN-Aerokraft, a private company which operates aircraft for Rosneft, had planned to buy dishes, cutlery and tablecloths worth $88,867 to furnish an executive jet.

Documents on the Rosneft website revealed that the firm had agreed to buy silver teaspoons for almost 15,000 rubles each ($267), water glasses for 11,700 thousand rubles each ($208) and 12 rugs for 124,000 each ($2,200).

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The plans attracted the attention of presidential hopeful Alexei Navalny, who condemned the purchases as crass luxuries for a company with close government ties.

Rosneft initially defended its position, with company spokesman Mikhail Leontiev telling Russian news outlet RBC that Rosneft employees, including its executive director, "should be provided with quality dishes, forks, spoons."
He also declared that the prices were
"reasonable," and that Rosneft had dedicated itself to "an unprecedented level of openness" by publicly releasing the details.

"Does Navalny eat with his hands and wipe his mouth on his sleeve?" Leontiev asked.

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RN-Aerokraft, however, later decided to drop the order, citing their supplier's refusal to lower prices.

RN-Aerokraft is wholly owned by Rosneft through its subsidiary RN-Aktiv. The company's chief executive, Sergei Tsoi, was the spokesman for former Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov.

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