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Rosneft CEO Sechin Taped Ulyukayev Conversations in FSB Bribe Sting

September 05, 2017



Alexei Ulyukaev **Nikerichev Andrei / Moskva News Agency**

The CEO of Russia's largest oil company secretly recorded conversations with former economy minister Alexei Ulyukayev as part of a sting operation, a Moscow court heard on Tuesday.

Transcripts of the recordings were read out by state prosecutors during a court hearing on Tuesday, the Mediazona news site reported.

"Here, take it. Put it inside and let's go," the transcript cited Sechin as saying, as he reportedly handed Ulyukayev a $2 million bribe.

Ulyukayev faces 15 years in prison for allegedly exacting a bribe from Sechin to approve Rosneft's purchase of a majority stake in Bashneft, another oil company. Sechin reportedly played a leading role in the sting operation.

In a phone conversation recorded by Sechin earlier on Nov. 14, the two officials agreed to meet

later that day to address Sechin's "many accumulated questions" about the deal.

Reading from a conversation transcript, the prosecutor quoted Sechin as saying, "take the basket."

Ulyukayev was detained at Rosneft's office with a bag full of marked bills half an hour after the set meeting time.

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The former minister believed he was being gifted a fruit basket with wine and sausages rather than a $2 million bribe, his lawyer said during recess on the third day of hearings.

Sechin and then-head of security at Rosneft Oleg Feoktistov agreed to take part in "covert activities" in a signed letter to FSB chief Alexander Bortnikov, court documents indicate. Ulyukayev accuses Feoktistov, a retiring FSB senior official, and Sechin of conspiring to frame him.

The next and fourth hearing in the high-profile corruption case is scheduled for Thursday, Sept. 7.

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