

Maryland Firm Settles U.S. Charges Over Bribes to Russian Official

By [Reuters](#)

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Vadim Mikerin

A Maryland-based company has agreed to pay \$2 million to settle charges that it bribed a Russian official to win contracts to ship uranium to the United States, U.S. authorities said on Tuesday.

Transport Logistics International admitted to bribing the Russian official with more than \$1.7 million over the course of a decade, through a maze of shell companies and accounts in Latvia, Cyprus and Switzerland, according to Maryland federal court papers made public on Tuesday.

The U.S. Justice Department agreed not to prosecute the company in exchange for TLI's cooperation in the investigation. TLI, acquired by the French industrial company Daher in 2009, also agreed to inform the Justice Department for the next three years of improvements to its anti-bribery policies.

The settlement is the latest development in a long-running federal probe into corruption in Russia's sale of uranium in the United States.

"Bribery of foreign officials not only distorts markets and undermines democratic institutions," acting U.S. Assistant Attorney General John Cronan said in a statement on Tuesday. "It can also pervert the incentives of those who are in a position to safeguard the public, as it did in this case involving the transportation of nuclear material."

The U.S. Foreign Corrupt Practices Act makes it a crime to bribe overseas officials to win contracts.

Related article: [Russian CEO Charged With Taking Bribes for Uranium Contracts in U.S.](#)

The uranium investigation drew increased public attention last year after an informant involved in the probe claimed to have evidence tying the former Obama administration to Russian influence peddling, a charge former administration officials have denied.

For decades, Washington and Moscow had an agreement that converted uranium from Russia's nuclear stockpiles to civilian grade fuel, which was shipped to the United States for use in civilian power plants.

To win contracts to ship the Russian uranium, from 2004 to 2014, TLI executives bribed Vadim Mikerin, a former director of Russia's state-owned nuclear enterprise Rosatom.

The TLI executives bribed Mikerin with money he referred to as "cake," through a series of sham consulting contracts. In 2010, a co-conspirator said to Mikerin in an email: "I met with TLI principals last week and confirmed the cake process on a quarterly basis — all is well," according to court records.

In 2015, a Maryland judge sentenced Mikerin to four years in prison for laundering money connected to the bribes. He is serving his sentence in North Carolina.

In January, U.S. prosecutors unsealed bribery charges against the former co-president of TLI, Mark Lambert, who denies the charges. His former co-president, Daren Condrey, pleaded guilty to bribery and wire fraud charges in 2015 and is awaiting sentencing.

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