



News Release

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International Arms Dealer Arrested On Terrorism Charges In Bangkok DEA Investigation Nabs Victor Bout for Conspiracy to Provide SAMs to a Foreign Terrorist Organization

MAR 6 -- DEA Acting Administrator Michele M. Leonhart and Michael J. Garcia, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced the arrest of Victor Bout, an international arms dealer charged with conspiring to sell millions of dollars worth of weapons to the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (the "FARC") -- a designated foreign terrorist organization based in Colombia. Bout and co-defendant Andrew Smulian were arrested yesterday on the U.S. charges by Thai authorities in Bangkok.

According to court documents, between November 2007 and February 2008, Bout and Smulian agreed to sell to the FARC millions of dollars worth of weapons including surface-to-air missile systems (SAMs) and armor piercing rocket launchers. During a series of recorded telephone calls and emails, Bout and Smulian agreed to sell the weapons to two confidential sources (CSs) working with the DEA, who held themselves out as FARC representatives acquiring these weapons for the FARC for use in Colombia.

In addition, during a series of consensually recorded meetings in Romania, Smulian advised the CSs, among other things, that Bout had 100 SAMs available immediately and could also provide helicopters and armor piercing rocket launchers. During one of the meetings with the CSs, Smulian provided one of the CSs with a digital memory stick that contained an article about Bout, and documents containing photographs and specifications for the SAMs and armor piercing rocket launchers that Smulian had previously said Bout could provide.

In between his meetings with the CSs, Smulian spoke to Bout over a cellphone provided to him by one of the CSs at the direction of the DEA. During one of these conversations, Bout and Smulian discussed the \$5 million delivery fee for the weapons.

Bout and Smulian are charged with conspiracy to provide material support or resources to a designated foreign terrorist organization. If convicted, the defendants each face a maximum sentence of 15 years' imprisonment.

The U.S. plans to pursue the extradition of the defendants from Thailand.

The international law enforcement operation announced today was the result of cooperation between the DEA, the Royal Thai Police, the Romanian Border Police, the Korps Politie Curacao of the Netherlands Antilles, and the Danish National Police Security Services.