



Department of Justice

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IRANIAN NATIONAL PLEADS GUILTY TO ATTEMPTING TO EXPORT MUNITIONS FROM THE UNITED STATES

MOBILE, Ala. - Omid Khalili, an Iranian national, pleaded guilty today in U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Alabama to attempting to illegally export fighter jet or military aircraft from the United States to Iran.

The guilty plea was announced by Kenyen R. Brown, U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Alabama; David Kris, Assistant Attorney General for National Security; John Morton, Department of Homeland Security, Assistant Secretary for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE); and Sharon Woods, Director of the Defense Criminal Investigative Service (DCIS).

Khalili along with defendant "Masun," whose last name is unknown, was charged in a nine-count indictment returned on Jan. 28, 2010, with conspiracy, money laundering, smuggling, as well as violations of the Arms Export Control Act and the International Emergency Economic Powers Act. Khalili was arrested by federal agents in March 2010 upon his arrival in Miami, Fla. Masun remains at large.

According to Khalili's factual proffer and the documents filed in court, Khalili, along with his co-conspirator Masun, have been actively working with the Iranian government to procure military items for the Iranian government. In November 2009, Khalili and Masun contacted an undercover agent (hereinafter known as "U/CI") seeking parts for the military aircraft for export to Iran and, thereafter, began having regular e-mail contact with U/CI regarding the requested aircraft parts.

These parts are replacement parts for a military aircraft that was sold to Iran by the United States before the 1979 Iranian revolution. As of 2009, this military aircraft is in service with only the Islamic Republic of Iran Air Force. The parts requested by the defendants are designated as defense articles on the U.S. Munitions List and may not be exported from the United States without a license from the U.S. State Department. In addition, these items may not be exported to

Iran without a license from the U.S. Treasury Department due to the U.S. trade embargo on Iran. The defendants had not obtained the required U.S. government export licenses for such exports.

On November 20, 2009, the Khalili sent an e-mail to the U/CI that contained a list of aircraft parts for the military aircraft and requested that the U/CI provide pricing for said aircraft parts. On December 1, 2009, the U/CI sent an e-mail to Khalili providing pricing for said aircraft parts. On December 4, 2009, Khalili and Masun talked with U/CI and informed him that the aircraft parts were to be sent to Iran and that, because of the U.S. embargo, they would first need to be shipped through an intermediate country. Thereafter, the defendant and other co-conspirators sent four separate cash deposits totaling in excess of \$70,000.00 by wire from a bank in the United Arab Emirates to a bank in Alabama as down payment for the aircraft parts to be shipped to Iran. Using e-mail and telephone calls, the agents agreed to send the requested parts to the defendants.

Kenyon R. Brown, U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Alabama said, "Today's prosecution clearly shows that the United States will relentlessly pursue cases dealing with those who are seeking to illegally purchase military equipment for Iran and will tenaciously follow every avenue to shut down illegal arms transfer to Iran."

"Today's plea underscores the continuing threat posed by Iranian procurement networks," said David Kris, Assistant Attorney General for National Security. "I applaud the many agents, analysts and prosecutors who worked tirelessly to bring about this important case."

"We realize foreign governments actively seek our equipment for their own military development. Therefore, preventing the export of critical technologies and restricted munitions is of extreme concern to the Department of Defense because of the real possibility that our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines may have to face this material in the hands of our adversaries and thereby lose the advantage that U.S. technology is supposed to provide them," said Sharon E. Woods, Director of the Defense Criminal Investigative Service. "Protecting American's Warfighters through technology protection is a top priority for the Defense Criminal Investigative Service, the law enforcement arm of the DOD Inspector General, and a fundamental focus for our special agents."

"The guilty plea of Khalili reflects the government's commitment to ensuring that critical technologies and military-grade weapons not fall into the wrong hands," said Immigration and Customs Enforcement Assistant Secretary John Morton. "ICE will continue bringing to bear its unique law enforcement authorities to investigate and enforce criminal violations of all U.S. export laws related to military items and controlled "dual-use" commodities."

Khalili faces a maximum penalty of ten years in prison and a \$1,000,000.00 fine.

This case was investigated by the Department of Homeland Security's ICE and the Department of Defense's DCIS. The prosecution is being handled by Assistant U.S. Attorney Gregory A. Bordenkircher of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Alabama, with assistance from the Counterespionage Section of the Justice Department's National Security Division.

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