
THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
SOUTHERN DISTRICT *of* CALIFORNIA

Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Southern District of California

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, April 27, 2015

San Diego Jury Finds Former Iranian National Guilty Of Illegal Scheme To Export Sensitive U.S. Technology To Iran

On April 23, 2015, a federal jury convicted a naturalized U.S. citizen and former Iranian national of violations of U.S. export and money laundering laws, arising from his involvement in a scheme to purchase marine navigation equipment and military electronic equipment for illegal export to, and end-use in, Iran.

The defendant, Arash Ghahreman, of Staten Island, New York, was convicted of: (1) attempted export to Iran, and conspiracy to do the same, in violation of the Iran Trade Embargo (formerly known as the Iranian Transactions and Sanctions Regulations); (2) smuggling goods from the United States, and conspiracy to the same; and (3) aiding and abetting the transfer of money from Dubai to the United States, in support of an illegal export activity, and conspiracy to do the same. The case involved a seven-day jury trial, beginning on April 13, 2015, and ending on April 23, 2015, when the jury returned a guilty verdict on seven counts of a nine-count indictment, after one day of deliberation. The jury was unable to reach a verdict on the two remaining two counts involving the attempted exportation and smuggling of a fiber optic gyrocompass, used in both military and civilian marine navigation applications.

The evidence presented at trial showed that Ghahreman acted as an agent of an Iranian procurement network which used a front company in Dubai, United Arab Emirates ("UAE"), to acquire U.S. goods and technologies for illegal transshipment to, and end-use in, Iran. Codefendant Koorush Taherkhani ("Taherkhani"), an Iranian national and resident, was the managing director and founder of that front company, codefendant TIG Marine Engineering Services ("TIG Marine"). Because of his German nationality, codefendant Ergun Yildiz, a resident of UAE, was hired by Taherkhani to be the "face" of the front company, as the President/CEO of TIG Marine. Before Ghahreman immigrated to the U.S. in 2007, Ghahreman and Taherkhani had been friends and dorm mates at an Iranian University, where each received a degree in marine

engineering. Upon graduation, both Ghahreman and Taherkhani worked as engineers for various Iranian shipping companies, including the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines and its subsidiaries. After immigrating to the United States, Ghahreman was employed by various shipyards in the U.S., and became a naturalized U.S. citizen. Because of his employment and citizenship status, Ghahreman was well placed to act as an agent of the illegal procurement network.

From December 2012, through June 17, 2013, Ghahreman and his codefendants negotiated, via email, text, telephone and meetings, with Homeland Security Investigations (“HSI”) and Defense Criminal Investigative Service (“DCIS”) undercover agents to purchase marine navigation components (fiber optic gyrocompasses), military electronic components (electron tubes), and other U.S. technology for illegal export to, and/or end-use in, Iran. The undercover agents were posing as brokers of U.S. goods and technology, willing to sell U.S. goods to the defendants for end-use in Iran. Ultimately, as a result of these negotiations, Ghahreman and his codefendants agreed to purchase four (4) Navigat-2100 fiber optic gyrocompasses and fifty (50) Y-690 units (electron tubes). Pursuant to that agreement, Ghahreman and his codefendants wired approximately \$60,000 in partial payment for the gyrocompasses and electron tubes from a bank in Dubai to the undercover agents’ bank account. Ultimately, on June 17, 2013, HSI agents arrested Ghahreman and Yildiz after they traveled to the U.S. and took partial delivery of one gyrocompass and two electron tubes and attempted to ship the items indirectly to Iran, via third countries.

Defendant Ghahreman is scheduled to be sentenced on July 17, 2015, before the Honorable Dana M. Sabraw. Codefendant Ergun Yildiz previously pled guilty to conspiracy to export to Iran on October 9, 2014, and is scheduled to be sentenced on May 8, 2015, before Judge Sabraw. Codefendant Taherkhani, an Iranian national and resident, remains a fugitive. Codefendant TIG Marine is a Dubai, UAE company.

DEFENDANTS

Case Number: 13cr4228-DMS

Arash Ghahreman	Age: 45	Staten Island, New York
Ergun Yildiz	Age: 35	Dubai, UAE
Koorush Taherkhani	Age: 43	Iran
TIG Marine, a UAE company		

CHARGES

Count 1: Conspiracy to Export to Embargoed Country (Iran), 50 U.S.C. §§ 1702 and 1705; 31 C.F.R. §§ 560.203 and 560.204 - Maximum penalties: 20 years in prison, \$1,000,000 fine, term of

supervised release of three years, and \$100 special assessment. **(defendant Ghahreman and Yildiz guilty on Count One.)**

Counts 3 and 4: Attempted Export to Embargoed Country (Iran), 50 U.S.C. §§ 1702 and 1705; 31 C.F.R. § 560.204 - Maximum penalties (per count): 20 years in prison, \$1,000,000 fine, term of supervised release of three years, and \$100 special assessment. **(Defendant Ghahreman guilty on Count 4; Government dismissed Count 3 after jury unable to reach verdict)**

Count 2: Conspiracy to Smuggle Goods from the United States, 18 U.S.C. " 371 and 554 - Maximum penalty: Five years in prison, \$250,000 fine, term of supervised release of three years, and \$100 special assessment. **(Defendant Ghahreman guilty on Count 2)**

Counts 5 and 6: to Smuggle Goods from the United States, 18 U.S.C. " 371 and 554 - Maximum penalties (per count): Ten years in prison, \$250,000 fine, term of supervised release of three years, and \$100 special assessment. **(Defendant Ghahreman guilty on Count 6; Government dismissed Count 5, after jury unable to reach verdict)**

Count 7 - Conspiracy to Launder Monetary Instruments, 18 U.S.C. § 1956(h) - Maximum penalties: Twenty years in prison, \$500,000 fine, term of supervised release of three years, and \$100 special assessment. **(Defendant Ghahreman guilty on Count 7)**

Counts 8 and 9 -- Laundering of Monetary Instruments, 18 U.S.C. " 1956(a)(2)(A) - Maximum penalties (per count): Twenty years in prison, \$500,000 fine, term of supervised release of three years, and \$100 special assessment. **(Defendant Ghahreman guilty on Counts 8 and 9)**

INVESTIGATING AGENCIES

Homeland Security Investigations, Department of Homeland Security
Defense Criminal Investigative Service