

# Feds: Man tried to export night-vision goggles to China

July 21 2015, by Jennifer Sinco Kelleher

---



This undated photo, provided by US Night Vision Corp., shows night vision goggles. A man who lives in China was arrested in Hawaii for allegedly arranging to buy six pairs of military-grade night vision goggles from an undercover

federal agent and trying to export them to his home country, court documents show. (US Night Vision Corp. via AP)

A man was arrested in Hawaii for allegedly arranging to buy six pairs of military-grade night-vision goggles from an undercover federal agent and trying to export them to China, court documents show.

Song Il Kim spent several months negotiating with the agent in Utah to buy the devices, which are manufactured in the U.S., for a total of \$22,000, according to a criminal complaint. The two types of goggles he allegedly wanted are made for the U.S. military and its allies, and it is illegal to export them without State Department authorization.

Kim, 41, tried to send the devices to China, according to the complaint, but it's unclear what he intended to do with them after that. He was born in North Korea, holds a Cambodian passport and lives in China, court records show.

A team of Homeland Security agents in Utah started investigating Kim in April.

One of the undercover agents met with Kim in Waikiki hotel rooms last week to discuss the transaction, the agent said Monday during Kim's detention hearing in federal court in Honolulu. Kim provided a \$16,000 cash down payment for the goggles in Hawaii, the criminal complaint said.

The agent and Kim put three of the devices in a box and sealed it, and Kim filled out a customs form stating the box contained used toys and towels, the document said. The agent went with Kim to a post office, where Kim had the box shipped to China. They made arrangements to

meet the next day to mail the three other devices.

The agent testified that before meeting Kim in Waikiki, he communicated with Kim online and over the phone. He said they communicated in English.



This undated photo, provided by US Night Vision Corp., shows night vision goggles. A man who lives in China was arrested in Hawaii for allegedly arranging to buy six pairs of military-grade night vision goggles from an undercover federal agent and trying to export them to his home country, court documents show. (US Night Vision Corp. via AP)

Kim appeared in court Monday with a Mandarin-speaking interpreter. The judge told him that he wasn't eligible for a public defender, so Kim requested to contact both the Cambodian and Chinese embassies for help hiring a lawyer.

Kim was ordered held without bail. He will be transferred to Utah, where the case originated, after he is indicted, assistant U.S. Attorney Tom Brady said.

The goggles Kim is accused of trying to obtain are on the United State Munitions List, and their export is regulated by the Arms Export Control Act.

It is federal policy to deny licenses and other approvals to export the items to certain countries: Belarus, Cuba, Iran, North Korea, Syria and Venezuela. The policy also applies to countries the United States maintains an arms embargo with, including Burma, China, Liberia and Sudan.

© 2015 The Associated Press. All rights reserved.

Citation: Feds: Man tried to export night-vision goggles to China (2015, July 21) retrieved 15 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2015-07-feds-export-night-vision-goggles.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--