



The United States Department of Justice

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SOUTH FLORIDA RESIDENT ARRESTED FOR ATTEMPTING TO ILLEGALLY EXPORT CONTROLLED ITEMS TO LIBYA

WASHINGTON – Peter Sotis, 55, of Delray Beach, Florida, was arrested yesterday based on an indictment charging him with conspiracy to violate and attempted violation of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) and the Export Administration Regulations (EAR), as well as smuggling of goods.

John C. Demers, Assistant Attorney General for National Security; Ariana Fajardo Orshan, U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Florida; Robert Luzzi, Special Agent in Charge of the Department of Commerce's Office of Export Enforcement (DOC) Miami Field Office; and Anthony Salisbury, Special Agent in Charge of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Homeland Security Investigations' (ICE-HSI) Miami Field Office, made the announcement.

The indictment alleges Sotis was the owner and principal of Add Helium, a Fort Lauderdale diving company. Sotis was charged with smuggling, conspiracy to violate and attempted violation of the IEEPA and the EAR by transferring dual-use goods, that is, articles that have both civilian and military application, for export to Libya without the required Department of Commerce license.

In particular, court documents indicated that Sotis and a co-defendant at Add Helium transferred four rebreathers, which were controlled under the EAR for national security reasons, to a shipping company for export to Libya after being informed by a Commerce agent that the items could not be exported while a license determination was pending. A rebreather is an apparatus that absorbs the carbon dioxide of a scuba diver's exhaled breath to permit the rebreathing (recycling) of each breath. This technology produces no bubbles, thereby concealing the diver's activities from those on the surface, and allowing a diver to stay underwater longer compared with normal diving equipment.



Sotis had his initial appearance on the charges today before U.S. Magistrate Judge John J. O'Sullivan. He is scheduled to be arraigned on the charges on Nov. 13, 2019, at 10 a.m. in Miami.

An indictment is merely an allegation and all defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

Assistant Attorney General Demers and U.S. Attorney Fajardo Orshan commended the investigative efforts of the DOC and HSI. They also thanked the FBI's Miami Field Office and U.S. Customs and Border Protection for their assistance.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Michael Thakur of the Southern District of Florida and Trial Attorney Thea D. R. Kendler of the National Security Division's Counterintelligence and Export Control Section.

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