

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

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, June 9, 2016

California Resident Convicted of Conspiring to Illegally Export Fighter Jet Engines and an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle to China

A California resident was convicted by a Southern District of Florida jury of conspiring to export and cause the export to the People's Republic of China of fighter jet engines, an unmanned aerial vehicle, commonly known as a drone, and related technical data, in violation of the Arms Export Control Act.

Wifredo A. Ferrer, U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Florida, John P. Carlin, Assistant Attorney General for National Security, Robert C. Hutchinson, Acting Special Agent in Charge, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement-Homeland Security Investigations (ICE-HSI), and John Khin, Special Agent in Charge, Department of Defense, Defense Criminal Investigative Service (DCIS), made the announcement.

Wenxia Man a/k/a "Wency Man," age 45, of San Diego, California, was convicted at trial of conspiring to export and cause the export of defense articles without the required license, in violation of Title 22, United States Code, Section 2778. She faces a statutory maximum penalty of 20 years in prison. Sentencing is scheduled for August 19, 2016 at 2:00 p.m., before Judge Beth Bloom in Miami.

The evidence at trial established that between approximately March 2011 and June 2013, Man conspired with Xinsheng Zhang, who was located in the People's Republic of China, to illegally acquire and export to China defense articles including: Pratt & Whitney F135-PW-100 engines used in the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter; Pratt & Whitney F119-PW-100 turbofan engines used in the F-22 Raptor fighter jet; General Electric F110-GE-132 engines designed for the F-16 fighter jet; the General Atomics MQ-9 Reaper/Predator B Unmanned Aerial Vehicle, capable of firing Hellfire Missiles; and technical data for each of these defense articles. During the course of the investigation, when talking to an HSI undercover agent, Man referred to Zhang, as a "technology spy" who worked on behalf of the Chinese military to copy items obtained from other countries, and stated that he was particularly interested in stealth technology.

“Protecting our nation from the illegal movement of technology and defense articles is a top national security concern,” stated U.S. Attorney Wifredo Ferrer. “In the interests of our national defense, the U.S. Attorney’s Office and our law enforcement partners will continue to target for criminal prosecution those who attempt to unlawfully procure military equipment, munitions, tools and materials.

"Man was convicted of conspiring to evade U.S. export laws by agreeing to illegally acquire and send to China fighter jet engines, a highly sophisticated military drone and related technical data," said Assistant Attorney General Carlin. "Circumventing U.S. laws designed to safeguard our most sensitive materials serves to undermine our national security interests and we will aggressively pursue those who try to do so. I would like to thank the many members of law enforcement whose tireless efforts led to this verdict."

“ICE-HSI works very closely with numerous domestic and international partners to deny prohibited recipients access to restricted arms, munitions, weapons and controlled technologies,” said HSI Acting Special Agent in Charge Robert C. Hutchinson.

“Today’s conviction of Wenxia Man demonstrates the commitment of the Defense Criminal Investigative Service (DCIS) and our partner agencies to ensure that those intent on harming our national security are brought to justice,” said Special Agent in Charge John F. Khin, DCIS. “The nation’s security relies upon our military possessing the most sophisticated technology and weapon systems in the world while simultaneously preventing these items from finding their way into the hands of our adversaries.”

Mr. Ferrer commended the investigative efforts of the ICE-HSI Counter Proliferation Unit and DCIS offices in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Michael Walleisa and Thea D. R. Kendler of the National Security Division’s Counterintelligence and Export Control Section.