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Department of Justice

Office of Public Affairs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, July 16, 2018

Russian National Charged in Conspiracy to Act as an Agent of the Russian Federation Within the United States

A criminal complaint was unsealed today in the District of Columbia charging a Russian national with conspiracy to act as an agent of the Russian Federation within the United States without prior notification to the Attorney General.

The announcement was made by Assistant Attorney General for National Security John C. Demers, U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia Jessie K. Liu, and Nancy McNamara, Assistant Director in Charge of the FBI's Washington Field Office.

Maria Butina, 29, a Russian citizen residing in Washington D.C., was arrested on July 15, 2018, in Washington, D.C., and made her initial appearance this afternoon before Magistrate Judge Deborah A. Robinson in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia. She was ordered held pending a hearing set for July 18, 2018.

According to the affidavit in support of the complaint, from as early as 2015 and continuing through at least February 2017, Butina worked at the direction of a high-level official in the Russian government who was previously a member of the legislature of the Russian Federation and later became a top official at the Russian Central Bank. This Russian official was sanctioned by the U.S. Department of the Treasury, Office of Foreign Assets Control in April 2018.

The court filings detail the Russian official's and Butina's efforts for Butina to act as an agent of Russia inside the United States by developing relationships with U.S. persons and infiltrating organizations having influence in American politics, for the purpose of advancing the interests of the Russian Federation. The filings also describe certain actions taken by Butina to further this effort during multiple visits from Russia and, later, when she entered and resided in the United States on a student visa. The filings allege that she undertook her activities without officially disclosing the fact that she was acting as an agent of Russian government, as required by law.

The charges in criminal complaints are merely allegations and every defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. The maximum penalty for conspiracy is five years. The maximum statutory sentence is prescribed by Congress and is provided here for informational purposes. If convicted of any offense, a defendant's sentence will be determined by the court based on the advisory U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

The investigation into this matter was conducted by the FBI's Washington Field Office. The case is being prosecuted by the National Security Section of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia and the National Security Division of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Attachment(s):

[Download Butina Complaint](#)

[Download Butina Affidavit](#)

Topic(s):

National Security

Component(s):

Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)

National Security Division (NSD)

USAO - District of Columbia

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