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U.S. has returned Russian criminals

By Lou Kilzer

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Russian President Vladimir Putin rejected U.S. requests to return National Security Agency contractor Edward Snowden to American soil, even though the United States returned at least seven men Russia wanted for various crimes since 2008, the Tribune-Review has learned.

Secretary of State John Kerry, seeking Snowden's return, said this week that the United States had informally returned Russian criminals during the past two years, despite the lack of a formal extradition treaty between the countries.

When the Trib sought details, the State Department referred calls to the Department of Homeland Security. Initially, DHS offered a single name of a man it said was wanted in Russia for four murders. Although a Russian citizen, suspect Mikhail Bulatov was wanted for contract killings in the independent country of Kazakhstan, the Trib found in records.

Asked about the discrepancy, DHS then listed seven Russians the United States returned specifically upon request by Moscow officials. The cases stretch over five years, not two years as Kerry stated, and demonstrate a pattern of cooperation:

- Stanislav Stanislav Satarinov, 34, wanted for drug smuggling; returned on March 27;
- Yevgeniy Nagorskiy, age not given, wanted for larceny and fraud; returned on Oct. 5;
- Stanislav Tskhovrebov, 34, sought for fraud and embezzlement; returned on March 29, 2012;
- Natalia Boyarintseva, 56, sought for fraud; returned on Nov. 9, 2011;
- Boris Rogatovsky, 44, wanted for organized crime and auto theft; returned on Nov. 28, 2009;
- David Stepanyants, 44, sought for robbery; returned on Oct. 17, 2009;
- Aleksandr Savgira, 41, sought for embezzlement; returned on Aug. 13, 2008.

Kerry and Homeland Security did not use the word "extradite" when explaining the return of the seven.

"We transferred to Russia seven people in the last two years that they requested, that we did without any clamor, without any rancor, without any argument, and according to our sense of meeting the appropriateness of their request," Kerry said.

Homeland Security referred to each case as having been "removed from the U.S."

A Homeland Security official, speaking only on background, told the Trib there have been standard deportations of Russians, as there are of citizens of almost all nationalities visiting the United States. However, it's clear the United States has deported some individuals to Russia after specific communications with Russia.

"From 2007 to 2012, the United States deported more than 1,700 Russian citizens back to Russia," the DHS said. "More than 500 of those deportees were criminal deportations. During the removal process, (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) cooperated fully with Russian law enforcement, notifying the Russian government weeks in advance of the removal."

The Justice Department did not respond to questions from the Trib about the legal distinction of the "transfer" or "return" of wanted people between countries lacking extradition treaties. It is possible that those returned had violated visa requirements.

"If you want to be technical, there's no extradition treaty," Kerry said in his earlier statements.

New York lawyer Alena Shautsova, who specializes in Russian immigration cases, said she was surprised to learn of the United States' handling of such cases.

"Of course there are no laws or regulations. This is not standard procedure," she said.

Satarinov's situation reflects the complexity of some of the cases because he was wanted in both countries, though at different times. According to a case filing in Florida, Satarinov wanted to become a big-

time cocaine dealer in St. Petersburg, Russia, and set about buying 50 kilograms a month at \$25,000 each. Satarinov reportedly told his would-be American supplier that "he worked with corrupt members of the Russian police and was not worried about getting arrested."

Satarinov then sent a confederate, Vitali Makarenkov, to Tampa on a test run to buy a kilogram. The supplier was an undercover Drug Enforcement Administration agent, who busted Makarenkov.

Satarinov remained free until his arrest during a trip to Germany, which has an extradition treaty with the United States. He was arrested on a U.S. warrant.

In April 2012, he pleaded guilty in U.S. District Court in Tampa and, under a plea arrangement, was sentenced to 30 months in prison and four years of probation.

In less than a year, Satarinov was back in Russia at Russia's request. Federal prosecutors in Florida said he was returned to Russia after receiving credit for time served in jails in Germany and the United States before his conviction.

His attorney in the Florida case, Ed Kuske, told the Trib he was unaware that his client was returned to his homeland. He assumed Satarinov was pleased by that.

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