



**U.S. Department of Justice  
U.S. Attorney's Office  
Western District of Texas**

**Robert Pitman, U.S. Attorney**

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February 24, 2012

**BRITISH BUSINESSMAN EXTRADITED TO WESTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS  
TO FACE FEDERAL CHARGES IN CONNECTION WITH THE  
ILLEGAL EXPORTATION OF DEFENSE ARTICLES**

**United States Attorney Robert Pitman** announced that British businessman Christopher Tappin, age 65, of Orpington, Kent, arrived in El Paso, Texas, this evening while in the custody of Deputy U.S. Marshals to face federal charges in connection with a scheme to illegally export parts used in Hawk surface-to-air missile systems to Iran. Tappin's extradition was the result of a formal request filed with the United Kingdom. Tappin is expected to have his initial appearance in federal court in El Paso at 2:30pm on Monday before United States Magistrate Judge Robert Castaneda.

On February 7, 2007, a federal grand jury in El Paso, Texas, returned a three-count indictment charging Tappin with one count each of conspiracy to illegally export defense articles, aiding and abetting the illegal export of defense articles and conspiracy to conduct illegal financial transactions.

The indictment alleges that from December 13, 2005 to January 25, 2007, Tappin conspired with others in an illegal attempt to export zinc/silver oxide reserve batteries, a special component of the Hawk Air Defense Missile. According to the indictment, in October 2006, Tappin allegedly purchased five batteries from an undercover U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. The indictment further alleges that Tappin wire transferred approximately \$25,000 from a London, England financial institution to a bank account in the United States as payment for the batteries and also arranged for the transfer of the batteries to the United Kingdom without an export license through his specifically designated freight forwarders in violation of export control regulations. According to court records, the batteries were ultimately destined for Iran.

Upon conviction, Tappin faces up to five years in federal prison on the charge of conspiracy to illegally export defense articles; up to ten years in federal prison on the charge of aiding and abetting the illegal export of defense articles; and up to 20 year in federal prison on the charge of conspiracy to conduct illegal financial transactions.

**It is important to note that an indictment is merely a charge and should not be considered as evidence of guilt. The defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.**

This case is being investigated by agents from the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Homeland Security Investigations. Assistant United States Attorney Greg McDonald is prosecuting this case on behalf of the Government.

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