

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

February 11, 2009

The Honorable Eric Holder  
Attorney General  
U.S. Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20530

The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Attorney General Holder and Secretary of State Clinton:

We are writing in regards to the United States' pending request with the Kingdom of Thailand for the extradition of Viktor Bout. As you know, Bout is stand trial in the United States for conspiring to provide weapons to a terrorist organization. We ask that this international arms dealer's extradition remain a top priority for your Departments and the United States government.

Viktor Bout was arrested in Bangkok, Thailand, as part of an elaborate U.S.-led law enforcement operation in March 2008. Federal prosecutors in New York are seeking Bout's extradition to stand trial for conspiracy to provide material support to a foreign terrorist organization. Indeed, Bout thought he was negotiating a deal to provide the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) with millions of dollars in arms when he was arrested in Thailand.


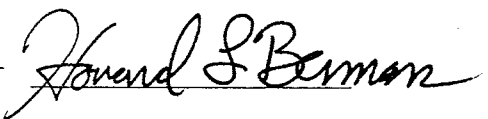
Prior to his arrest, Viktor Bout fueled many brutal civil wars on the African continent and elsewhere through the illicit sale of arms. Dubbed the "Merchant of Death," Bout dealt weapons to several sides fighting in the Democratic Republic of Congo and rebels in Angola in the 1990s, breaking international arms embargoes. Former Liberian president Charles Taylor relied on Bout to arm his reign of terror in West Africa, violently suppressing opposition to his corrupt rule in Liberia and arming allies in neighboring Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Cote d'Ivoire. In Afghanistan, Bout simultaneously armed the Taliban and the Northern Alliance.

As you may know, Bout's extradition has been proceeding through the Thai judicial system since July of last year. We are concerned, however, that Bout's legal team has been successful in delaying the extradition process. At his most recent hearing in December, Bout managed to delay proceedings until March. Reports suggesting that the Russian government is attempting to negatively influence this process only heighten our concern. Indeed, the Russian Duma recently passed a resolution calling for Bout to be returned to Russia.

As Mr. Bout's actions have threatened the security of many countries and regions and destroyed the lives of thousands of innocent individuals, the United States Congress is following his case closely. We thank you for your attention to the extradition proceedings of Viktor Bout so that he may face trial in the United States. We look forward to working with you on this and other important national security issues facing the United States.

Sincerely,

  
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*February 11, 2009*

Letter to Attorney General Holder and Secretary of State Clinton re: Viktor Bout

Signatories:

Rep. Ed Royce

Rep. Brad Sherman

Rep. Howard Berman

Rep. Eliot Engel

Rep. Don Manzullo

Rep. Anh "Joseph" Cao

Rep. Ken Calvert

Rep. Robert Wexler

Rep. Dan Burton

Rep. Donald Payne

Rep. Chris Smith

Rep. Ellen Tauscher

Rep. Trent Franks

Rep. Joe Crowley

Rep. Thad McCotter

Rep. Mike Conaway

Rep. John Boozman

Rep. Mike Pence

Rep. Brad Miller

Rep. Sue Myrick

Rep. David Scott

Rep. Joe Pitts

Rep. Bob Inglis

Rep. Joe Wilson

Rep. Frank Wolf

Rep. Connie Mack

Rep. Robert Aderholt