

Australian Charged In U.S. Says He Sold To Iran

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — An Australian man charged in a scheme to export components for drones, torpedoes and other technology to Iran said Thursday that he sold materials to Iran but didn't know he was breaking U.S. laws.

David Levick told The Associated Press he first heard about the indictment when contacted by reporters Thursday. He said he hasn't spoken to any U.S. or Australian officials and that he hasn't been hiding because he didn't know he had done anything wrong.

"I don't know what's happening," Levick said in a telephone interview in Australia. "I've got no idea what's going on so I'm just playing it quiet, shutting up and seeing what happens."

He would not say what materials he had sold to Iran.

"I can't say. I've been told not to speak," he said.

A five-count indictment returned in Washington on Wednesday accuses Levick of knowingly skirting a federal trade embargo with Iran and plotting to export the technology without the required authorization.

Prosecutors say Levick and his company, ICM Components, Inc., ordered materials on behalf of an unnamed representative of an Iranian trade company. Levick concealed the fact that the goods were intended for shipment to Iran, sometimes placing orders through a Florida-based broker, and duped manufacturers, shippers and distributors about their intended use, the indictment alleges.

Prosecutors said the company representative who worked with Levick, identified in court papers as "Iranian A," would not have been able to directly purchase the goods from the United States on his own.

Prosecutors claim Levick and "Iranian A" were in steady contact. In March 2008, according to the indictment, "Iranian A" told Levick that he might have to pay Levick from Malaysia because his bank in Iran was no longer working with a bank in Australia. Levick told the man to go ahead.

"I have just been informed that the U.S. have (sic) put more restriction(s) on the mo(ve)ment of funds from Iran," the indictment quotes Levick as saying. He adds: "So you will have to do it from Malaysia next month. Will keep you posted(.) Bloody yanks."

The alleged export scheme spanned about two years starting around March 2007.

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The indictment charges Levick and the company with conspiracy and with four counts of illegally exporting goods to an embargoed nation.

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