



# U.S. DEPARTMENT of STATE

## Press Statement

**Richard Boucher, Spokesman**

Washington, DC

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## **Foreign Service Officer Pleads Guilty to Visa Fraud**

Alexander Meerovich, a career Foreign Service officer, pled guilty to one count of visa fraud in U.S. Federal District Court in the District of Columbia today. His plea is the result of an investigation conducted by the Diplomatic Security Service, which received valuable assistance and support from the Bureau of Consular Affairs, the U.S. Embassy in Prague, the Department of Justice, and the Czech police.

Mr. Meerovich was charged and pled guilty to issuing visas illegally while serving as a Consular Officer at the U.S. Embassy in Prague from August 1999 to July 2002. The investigation into the full extent of his criminal activity is still ongoing.

We deeply regret the criminal actions of Mr. Meerovich. We entrusted him with maintaining the integrity of the visa process, a critical component in the protection of U.S. borders, during his assignment to Prague. We will continue to work closely with the Department of Justice to ensure that Mr. Meerovich is appropriately punished for his crimes.

Mr. Meerovich faces a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison and a fine of \$250,000.

The State Department has zero tolerance for employees who commit visa fraud. We will continue to investigate all allegations of visa fraud vigorously and seek to prosecute and punish those people engaged in visa fraud to the fullest extent of the law.