# Russian officer identified as mastermind behind parcel bomb attacks on US-bound flights



A high-ranking Russian military intelligence officer has been identified as a leading figure behind a series of parcel bomb attacks targeting US-bound flights, efforts that culminated in a fire at a DHL logistics centre in Birmingham last year. The plot, which involved incendiary devices concealed within parcels, sparked fears of a grave security breach on passenger planes en route to the United States and Canada.

According to The Times, Colonel Denis Smolyaninov of Russia’s GRU (Main Intelligence Directorate) is believed to have masterminded the sabotage operation. Investigations revealed that last year, unknown operatives sent two incendiary devices through DHL logistic hubs in Birmingham, UK, and Leipzig, Germany. These devices ignited fires within the facilities but did not trigger explosions while on board aircraft, which officials described as a "pure accident."

The Birmingham incident led to the arrest and charging of four individuals accused of participating in sabotage and terrorist acts on behalf of a foreign intelligence agency. Fortunately, no injuries were reported, but authorities have expressed concern that the consequences could have been far more severe had the devices detonated during flight.

Similar explosions were reported at an airport in Warsaw shortly after the incidents in Birmingham and Leipzig. Pawel Szota, head of Poland's foreign intelligence, attributed the Warsaw fire to Russia, though official prosecutor statements did not explicitly name the responsible foreign government. German broadcasters WDR and NDR, along with the Süddeutsche Zeitung, investigated the parcel contents, uncovering that the incendiaries had been hidden within innocuous-looking packages containing massage cushions, cosmetics, and sex toys. This method helped the devices evade detection by pre-flight security measures.

European officials have emphasised that the near-catastrophic outcome was avoided solely because the bombs failed to ignite while aboard the aircraft. It is believed that the parcels were intended not only to cause damage but also to test vulnerabilities in Western airfreight and delivery systems tied to the US.

Documents obtained by the Dossier Center, an investigative group funded by Kremlin critic Mikhail Khodorkovsky, indicate that Colonel Smolyaninov has been involved in plotting disruptions to Western aviation since 2014. The materials suggest plans to interfere with radio communication between pilots and ground control, which could have severely compromised flight safety by causing communication breakdowns and misdirection.

Further developments occurred in August 2024 when two parcels containing clothes, trainers, and tracking devices were sent from Warsaw to the US and Canada. These shipments are thought to have been preliminary “dry runs” for such sabotage efforts.

Investigations have led to the detention of several individuals connected to the plot, including Ukrainians and Lithuanians. Another figure linked to these operations is a Russian named Aleksandr B, arrested in Bosnia-Herzegovina on suspicion of training Moldovan nationals for protests in their country. He was extradited to Poland on charges related to coordinating acts of sabotage.

Reports from German media indicate that the series of sabotage attempts ceased last year after the United States officially confronted Russia with knowledge of those responsible and issued warnings against further escalation.

The Russian embassy in Berlin has dismissed the sabotage allegations as "paranoia" and "conspiracy theories," rejecting claims of state involvement in the attacks.

This complex series of events highlights significant concerns about aviation security and intelligence operations involving parcel shipments routed through critical airfreight hubs in Europe. The investigations continue to unfold amid heightened diplomatic tensions linked to these covert activities.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

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