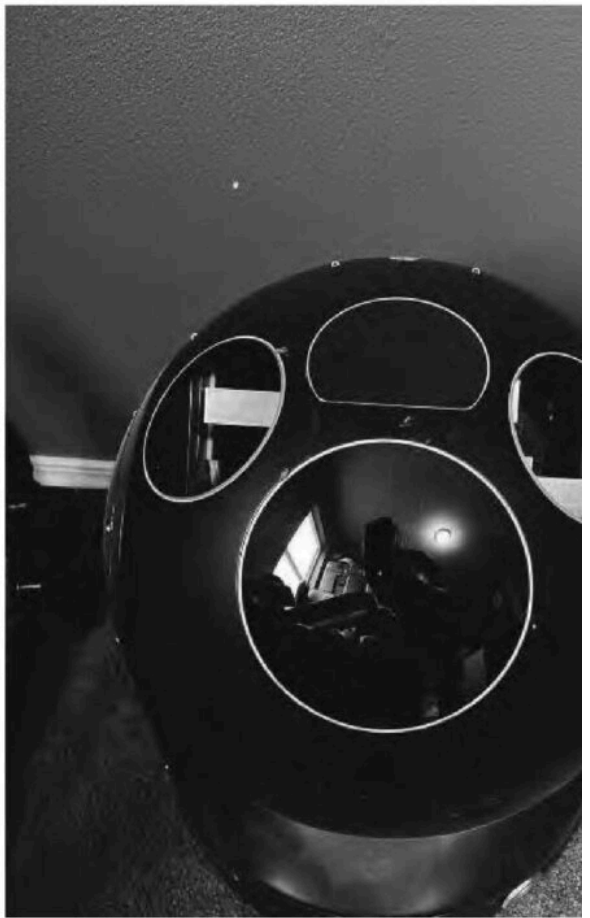


Chinese Illegal Immigrant Shipped Weapons From California to North Korea: DOJ

Shenghua Wen told investigators he believed the North Korean regime wanted the weapons to prepare for an attack against South Korea.

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Some of the devices DOJ says Shenghua Wen intended to smuggle to North Korea from Long Beach, Calif. DOJ



By Ilene Eng

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A A Print

A Chinese national illegally residing in Southern California was arrested on Dec. 3 for allegedly exporting firearms, ammunition, and other military items to North Korea.

According to the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), 41-year-old Shenghua Wen and his co-conspirators allegedly sent at least two shipments of the weapons inside shipping containers from Long Beach through Hong Kong to North Korea.

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During a series of Mirandized interviews, Wen admitted to exporting firearms and ammunition to North Korea at the direction of the North Korean government,” according to the affidavit filed on Nov. 26.



Wen, who arrived in the United States in 2012, has been living here illegally since overstaying his student visa, and is therefore prohibited



from possessing any firearms or ammunition, according to court documents.



Law enforcement searched his home in Ontario, California, on Aug. 14 and seized two devices they say Wen had admitted were to be used militarily by North Korea, “a chemical threat identification device and a hand-held broadband receiver that detects eavesdropping devices.” On Sept. 6, authorities also seized about 50,000 rounds of 9mm ammunition that they alleged Wen intended to send to North Korea.

Authorities conducted the search after reviewing Wen’s iPhone with messages about the smuggling in December 2023. They said the messages revealed conversations between Wen and his co-conspirators about shipping military-grade equipment to North Korea and included photos of the items. Between January and April this year, Wen allegedly sent emails and text messages to a broker in the United States about negotiating a price to obtain a civilian airplane engine.

In an interview on Sept. 6, according to an affidavit, Wen said that before he came to the United States, he met with North Korean officials at two separate North Korean Consulates in China. He said he was instructed to procure the goods on behalf of the North Korean regime and that he was likely selected because he was good at smuggling. Wen said he believed the regime wanted the weapons to prepare for an attack against South Korea.

“He also explained that the North Korean government wanted [him] to obtain military uniforms for the North Korean government, which would subsequently be used by the North Korean military to disguise their soldiers to conduct a surprise attack on South Korea,” the affidavit states.

During the Aug. 14 interview, Wen admitted to shipping two containers of firearms from Long Beach to North Korea in October and December 2023, according to the affidavit. The North Korean regime provided money for the containers and shipping fees and about \$2 million to buy firearms and other products.

In a Sept. 11 interview, Wen said he purchased many of the firearms in Texas and drove them to California in three separate trips, according to the affidavit. The North Korean regime also allegedly instructed him to purchase civilian airplane engines for their military drone program.

“Wen is charged with conspiracy to violate the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, which carries a statutory maximum penalty of 20 years in federal prison,” according to the DOJ.

The case is currently under investigation.

Wen’s initial appearance is scheduled for the afternoon of Dec. 3, a DOJ spokesperson told The Epoch Times in an emailed statement. He was ordered to go to jail without bond with an arraignment scheduled for Jan. 7, 2025, at 11 a.m.

The Epoch Times reached out to Wen’s attorney for comment and did not hear back by publication time.

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