

FBI raids home of Scott Ritter over allegations he is an unregistered foreign agent

Kevin Reed
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On Wednesday, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) raided the upstate New York home of Scott Ritter, the former US Marine Corps intelligence officer and United Nations weapons inspector. Ritter's cars were also searched.

Outside of his residence in Delmar, Ritter told reporters that the FBI and New York state police presented him with a warrant that focused on a potential violation of the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA).

Spectrum News of Central New York reported on and published a photograph of FBI agents removing several boxes of materials from Ritter's home. The contents of the material taken have not been disclosed.

From his front lawn, Ritter said:

I'm being targeted because I have made an effort to try and improve relations between the United States and Russia, try to bring about arms control, try to bring about peace.

Ritter continued:

The idea that you have a free speech right in America, when you execute it in a manner that the US government takes exception to, and they launch a search warrant, that is an intimidation factor.

Ritter has been a vocal opponent of the US-NATO proxy war against Russia in Ukraine. In early June, the US State Department revoked Ritter's passport at John

F. Kennedy Airport in New York as he was preparing to board a Turkish Airlines flight to Istanbul on his way to St. Petersburg, Russia to attend a conference.

According to the provisions of FARA, adopted in 1938, "foreign agents," i.e., individuals or organizations engaged in domestic lobbying or advocacy for a foreign government, must register as such with the US Justice Department and disclose their relationship, activities and financial compensation.

FARA grew out of the Section 951 of the Espionage Act of 1917, which was used to suppress opposition to the entry of the US into World War I on the grounds that opponents of the war were foreign agents. FARA was passed in the lead-up to World War II ostensibly to counter Nazi propaganda in the US.

Following the end of World War II in 1945, FARA prosecutions declined dramatically. There were only two indictments between 1945 and 1955, followed by nine "failure to file" indictments between 1955 and 1962.

The use of FARA underwent a "big shift," in the words of Justice Department official John Demers, with the onset of the Russian "election interference" allegations by the US intelligence community and the Democratic Party in the aftermath of the victory of Republican Donald Trump over Democrat Hillary Clinton for president in 2016.

An FBI spokeswoman confirmed to the *New York Post* on Wednesday that the raid on Ritter's home was part of a federal investigation, but she declined to comment on specifics, citing an ongoing probe.

The raid took place one day after Ritter was photographed with candidate for US President Robert F. Kennedy Jr., who was in the area to attend a hearing in Albany over whether he will appear on New York's November ballot, according to the *Times Union*.

Ritter posted the photo with Kennedy, which was taken at a sports bar at the Hilton Garden Inn in Albany, and wrote, “Burgers with Bobby!”

Two days prior to the FBI raid, Ritter appeared on the Judge Andrew Napolitano YouTube show called “Judging Freedom,” where he said, “Israel has become, literally, the worst incarnation of what we could imagine Nazi Germany was like back in the day.”

Ritter then pointed to the latest Zionist atrocity, saying, “They blew up a school today with students in it. The students were inside the school burning to death.” He added, “That happens on a daily basis.”

Ritter served as a Marine Corps intelligence officer during the George H.W. Bush administration and Operation Desert Storm in 1991. In 1992, in comments published in a *New York Times* op-ed, he publicly disputed the claims by General Norman Schwarzkopf that US forces had destroyed much of Iraq’s Scud missile capability during the first Gulf War in Iraq.

Ritter then worked for the United Nations Special Commission, the body tasked with searching for weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) in Iraq following the war, between 1991 and 1998. He was chief inspector for 14 of the more than 30 UN inspection missions in Iraq.

In the early 2000s, Ritter publicly argued that Iraq did not possess WMDs. By 2002, Ritter was an outspoken opponent of the George W. Bush administration’s claims that Iraq possessed WMD stocks or manufacturing capabilities. Prior to the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, Ritter stated that the US and British governments were using the alleged presence of WMDs as a political excuse to attack the country.

In April 2022, after Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, Ritter posted a tweet holding the National Police of Ukraine responsible for the Bucha massacre and calling US President Joe Biden a “war criminal” for “seeking to shift blame for the Bucha murders” onto Russia. The US and NATO claimed that the Russian Armed Forces were responsible for the killing of hundreds of civilians and prisoners of war in the Ukrainian city.

Ritter was suspended from Twitter for violating its rule on “harassment and abuse,” although his account was reinstated the following day.

Ritter was the subject of multiple law enforcement sting operations involving alleged sex offenses with under-age girls. The first case occurred in 2001, when

he was charged with a misdemeanor crime. The case was eventually dismissed and the record sealed after he completed six months of pre-trial probation.

He was arrested a second time in November 2009 in connection with communications with a police decoy he met on an Internet chat site. In the second case, Ritter rejected a plea bargain and was found guilty of a series of sex-related offenses in a courtroom in Monroe County, Pennsylvania, on April 14, 2011. He was later sentenced to one-and-a-half to five-and-a-half years in prison and served time at Laurel Highlands state prison in Somerset County, Pennsylvania from March 2012 to September 2014.



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