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U.S. Attorney's Office
Western District of Texas

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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COCAINE KINGPINS PLEAD GUILTY IN FEDERAL COURT

United States Attorney Johnny Sutton announced that just before the jury was sworn in this morning in federal court in Midland, Texas, Hernaldo Perea Beltran, 38, pled guilty to the indictment charging him with conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute more than five kilograms of cocaine in the Odessa-Midland area as well as Dallas and Kansas City. Hernaldo Beltran faces a minimum of five years imprisonment and as much as forty years. Hernaldo Beltran's brothers Raul, 40, and Jesus, 30, previously plead guilty to the same charge last month. United States District Judge Robert Junell will sentence the Beltrans following the completion of a pre-sentence report by the United States Probation Office.

From January 1991 through April 2001, Hernaldo Beltran, Raul Beltran and Jesus Beltran worked and conspired together and with others to import large quantities of cocaine from Juarez, Mexico, through El Paso, TX, and to then distribute this cocaine in the Midland-Odessa, TX, area. The brothers also distributed the cocaine in North Texas, Kansas and elsewhere. These three defendants used the same suppliers and at times, transported and distributed cocaine loads together. Hernaldo Beltran, Raul Beltran, Jesus Beltran, and Rodrigo Beltran were the leaders, organizers and managers of this criminal enterprise. Over time, there were at least 15 criminal participants under the Beltrans' leadership that loaded, transported and distributed cocaine, returned cocaine proceeds to the Beltrans and/or acted as retail distributors for this organization.

Hernaldo Beltran, Raul Beltran, Jesus Beltran, and Rodrigo Beltran distributed and possessed with intent to distribute in excess of 6,000 kilograms of cocaine over the course of the conspiracy and as much as 26,000 kilograms of cocaine based on co-conspirator statements. The Beltran organization sold each kilogram of cocaine for between $16,000 and $20,000 depending on the amount purchased by the buyer from the Beltran organization, the ability and dependability of the buyer to quickly sell the cocaine and return the money owed to the Beltran organization, and the price and available supply of cocaine in Mexico and the demand in the United States. The cocaine was either sold outright for cash or "fronted" to the purchaser or a combination of both. "Fronting" is selling the cocaine on consignment; that is, the Beltran organization would give the cocaine to the purchaser and the purchaser would sell the cocaine and give the money owed back to the Beltran organization.

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When arrests in this case began in December 2000, Hernaldo Beltran, Raul Beltran, Jesus Beltran, and Rodolfo Beltran fled to Mexico and were fugitives from justice until their apprehension on the evening of December 31, 2001, by the Mexican Agencia Federales Investigaciones (AFI) in Juarez. Their arrests were based on a provisional arrest request by the United States. Thanks to assistance from the Mexican Attorney General's Office and Foreign Ministry, Hernaldo Beltran, Raul Beltran, Jesus Beltran, and Rodolfo Beltran were ordered extradited to the United States by the Mexican courts in November 2004. Jesus Beltran pled guilty on April 28, 2005. Rodolfo Beltran was returned from Mexico to the United States earlier and pled guilty to the indictment on August 27, 2003.

The Midland-Odessa DEA Task Force was the lead investigative unit for this case. Other agencies involved with the investigation of this case included the United States Border Patrol, United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Midland County Sheriff's Office, Midland Police Department, Texas Department of Public Safety, Pecos Police Department, Reeves County Sheriff's Office, Kansas City (KS) DEA Task Force and the Culberson County Sheriff's Office. Over 27 kilograms of cocaine and more than $200,000 were seized by law enforcement authorities. Assistant United States Attorney Mark Roomberg handled the prosecution for the United States Attorney's Office.

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