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**THREE DEFENDANTS FACING FEDERAL DRUG CHARGES IN
CHICAGO AMONG 15 EXTRADITED FROM MEXICO IN PAST WEEK**

CHICAGO — Three defendants facing federal narcotics charges in Chicago arrived here today after being extradited from Mexico, federal law enforcement officials announced. All three were arrested in Mexico in May 2006 during a Mexican law enforcement raid on a laboratory in Toluca, Mexico, where synthetic fentanyl allegedly was being produced for importation into the United States where it was sold as a substitute for, or was purported to be, heroin. In late 2005 and early 2006, fentanyl-related deaths occurred among apparent drug-users in Chicago, Detroit and elsewhere. The charges against these three defendants resulted from an investigation that followed those deaths, but there are no allegations that these defendants were responsible for any deaths.

The defendants are among a total of 15 individuals (12 of whom are charged with narcotics-related offenses) who have been extradited over the past week from Mexico to the United States to stand trial, to be sentenced or to serve sentences, announced Assistant Attorney General Lanny A. Breuer of the Justice Department's Criminal Division; Patrick J. Fitzgerald, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois; and Jack Riley, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Chicago Field Division of the Drug Enforcement Administration.

The three defendants who arrived in Chicago today are: **Oscar Jacobo Rivera-Peralta**, 38; **Ricardo Valdez-Torres**, 56; and **Alfredo Molina-Garcia**, 45. Valdez-Torres and Molina-Garcia will appear at 11 a.m. Thursday before U.S. Magistrate Judge Arlander Keys, and Rivera-Peralta will appear at 10 a.m. Thursday before U.S. District Judge James Zagel in Federal Court in Chicago.

“Extraditions are an important tool we have to ensure that alleged criminals are brought to justice in this country,” said Assistant Attorney General Breuer. “Over the past decade, the Department of Justice has established stronger partnerships with Mexico in many areas of law enforcement, including extraditions to and from each country. With these extraditions of individuals who committed or stand charged with dangerous crimes, we look forward to seeing those partnerships continue to strengthen.”

Rivera-Peralta, also known as “Jacoboo;” Valdez-Torres, aka “Cerebro” and “The Cooker,” and Molina-Garcia, aka “Guero,” were among 13 defendants who were indicted in 2007 for allegedly participating in a drug trafficking conspiracy between 2001 and May 2006 to possess and distribute multiple kilograms of cocaine and heroin and more than 400 grams of fentanyl. Six of the 13 defendants have pleaded guilty to narcotics-related charges, while four others remain fugitives. (*U.S. v. Chavez, et al.*, 06 CR 138.)

Valdez-Torres and Molina-Garcia were also charged with manufacturing fentanyl with intent to import it into the United States for distribution in a criminal complaint that was filed yesterday in U.S. District Court. The new charges allege that Valdez-Torres manufactured fentanyl in a laboratory in Toluca, Mexico, that was subsequently imported into the United States and distributed in Chicago and elsewhere. Molina-Garcia allegedly represented the drug-trafficking organization’s financial and personal interest in the Toluca laboratory and oversaw its operations.

The 2007 indictment alleges that Rivera-Peralta assisted in establishing a company in Mexico named Distribuidora Talios SA de CV, which purported to be a legitimate business but was actually a front company through which he and others ordered chemicals and equipment to be used in manufacturing wholesale quantities of fentanyl.

The charges against all three defendants carry a mandatory minimum penalty of 10 years in prison and a maximum of life imprisonment and a \$4 million fine. If convicted, the Court must impose a reasonable sentence under the advisory United States Sentencing Guidelines.

The government is being represented by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Terra Reynolds and Stephen Baker. The Department of Justice Criminal Division's Office of International Affairs (OIA) worked with law enforcement colleagues in the United States and Mexico to affect the extraditions.

Indictments and complaints contain only charges and are not evidence of guilt. The defendants are presumed innocent and are entitled to a fair trial at which the government has the burden of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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