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**MANHATTAN U.S. ATTORNEY ANNOUNCES EXTRADITION
OF TWO U.S. CITIZENS CHARGED WITH CONSPIRING
TO AID THE TALIBAN**

*Defendants Extradited From Romania To Face Charges
For Agreeing To Sell Surface-To-Air Missiles and
Other Lethal Weapons To The Taliban*

PREET BHARARA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, and MICHELE M. LEONHART, the Administrator of the United States Drug Enforcement Administration ("DEA"), announced today that ALWAR POURYAN and ODED ORBACH were extradited from Romania where they had been arrested for conspiring to sell weapons to the Taliban, including surface-to-air missiles ("SAMs"), to be used to protect Taliban-owned heroin laboratories in Afghanistan. POURYAN and ORBACH, both naturalized United States citizens, will make their first appearance today in Manhattan federal court. Their co-defendants, MAROUN SAADE, WALID NASR, FRANCIS SOUROU AHISSOU, CORNEILLE DATO, and MARTIN RAOUF BOURAIMA, were previously arrested in Liberia and brought to the United States in February 2011.

Manhattan U.S. Attorney PREET BHARARA stated: "As charged, Alwar Pouryan and Oded Orbach -- two U.S. citizens -- thought that they were arranging the sale of lethal weapons to members of a dangerous narco-terrorist organization to protect its lucrative narcotics operation and harm Americans in the process. They will now begin to answer for their actions in Manhattan federal court. We will continue to work aggressively with our partners at the DEA and around the world to bring those who would do harm to Americans to justice."

DEA Administrator MICHELE M. LEONHART stated: "We see a troublesome trend worldwide - the tie between drug trafficking and dangerous global terrorists who scheme every day to harm innocent Americans and others around the world. Our partners in Europe and West Africa helped make this possible, ensuring these narco-terrorists will now get what they fear most: prosecution in a U.S. court of law."

According to the Superseding Indictment:

Beginning in the summer of 2010, the defendants communicated with confidential sources ("CSs") working with the DEA who purported to represent the Taliban. The communications occurred by telephone, via email, and in a series of audio-recorded and videotaped meetings over several months in Benin, Ghana, Ukraine, and Romania.

During meetings in Ghana, Ukraine, and Romania beginning in November 2010, SAADE, POURYAN, and ORBACH, at different times, allegedly agreed to arrange the sale of weapons, including SAMs, to the CSs for the Taliban's use in Afghanistan. SAADE introduced the CSs to POURYAN, whom SAADE described as a weapons trafficker affiliated with Hezbollah. The CSs thereafter engaged in a series of meetings with POURYAN and ORBACH during which POURYAN and ORBACH discussed specifications, pricing, and the provision of training for the sale of various weapons, including, among others, SAMs, anti-tank missiles, grenade launchers, AK-47s, and M-16s.

For example, on February 9 and 10, 2011, in Bucharest, Romania, POURYAN and ORBACH met with a DEA confidential source, who purported to work for the Taliban, and who stated that the Taliban were seeking to purchase modern weapons, including SAMs, in order to protect their heroin laboratories from attacks by U.S. helicopters. POURYAN and ORBACH told the confidential source that they could provide advice on which types of weapons to purchase and discussed payment for, and delivery of, the weapons.

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Counts Four and Five of the Superseding Indictment charge POURYAN and ORBACH, along with other co-defendants, as follows:

- Count Four charges SAADE, NASR, POURYAN, and ORBACH with conspiracy to provide material support and resources to terrorists -- namely, the Taliban -- in

violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 2339A.

- Count Five charges SAADE, POURYAN, and ORBACH with conspiracy to acquire and transfer anti-aircraft missiles, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 2332g.

Count Four carries a maximum penalty of 15 years in prison. Count Five carries a maximum penalty of life in prison, with a mandatory minimum term of 25 years in prison.

POURYAN and ORBACH were arrested in Bucharest, Romania, in coordination with Romanian authorities, on February 10, 2011, and remained in the custody of Romanian authorities until their extradition today to the United States.

The charges, arrests, and transfers of the defendants were the result of close cooperation among the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York, the Special Operations Division of the DEA, the DEA Lagos Country Office, the DEA Warsaw Country Office, the DEA Ghana Country Office, the DEA Athens Country Office, the DEA SECI (South East European Cooperative Initiative Regional Center for Combating Transborder Crime), the Criminal Division's Office of International Affairs and the National Security Division of the U.S. Department of Justice, the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Illinois, the U.S. Department of State, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and the governments of the Republic of Liberia, Romania, and Ukraine.

Mr. BHARARA expressed his sincere gratitude for the work of the Romanian National Prosecutor's Directorate for Investigating Organized Crime and Terrorism, the Romanian Prosecutor's Office of the Court of Appeals, and the Romanian National Police Directorate for Investigating Organized Crime.

This prosecution is being handled by the Office's Terrorism and International Narcotics Unit. Assistant U.S. Attorneys CHRISTIAN R. EVERDELL, AIMEE HECTOR, and GLEN A. KOPP are in charge of the prosecution.

The charges contained in the Superseding Indictment are merely accusations and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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