



***United States Attorney
Southern District of New York***

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**FARC ASSOCIATE PLEADS GUILTY IN MANHATTAN FEDERAL COURT
TO PROVIDING MATERIAL SUPPORT TO A
FOREIGN TERRORIST ORGANIZATION**

PREET BHARARA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced today the guilty plea of JUANITO CORDOBA-BERMUDEZ, an associate of the 57th Front of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia ("FARC"), A Colombian terrorist group, to a Indictment charging him with participating in a conspiracy to provide material support to a foreign terrorist organization. CORDOBA-BERMUDEZ was arrested in Panama in 2008 and was transferred to United States custody in May of 2009.

According to the Indictment previously unsealed in the case:

The FARC was formed in 1964 and is structured as a military organization, with approximately 10,000 armed guerillas organized into seven "blocs," 68 numbered "Fronts" (including the 57th Front), nine named "Fronts," and four urban "militias." The FARC is dedicated to the violent overthrow of Colombia's democratically-elected government and has been designated as a foreign terrorist organization by the United States Department of State. The 57th Front operates in the territory within Colombia's Choco Department, which borders Panama. The 57th Front supports the FARC's terrorist activities through narcotics trafficking and kidnapping for ransom, including the kidnapping of Americans and other foreign nationals.

The Indictment recounts multiple discussions among various co-defendants, including CORDOBA-BERMUDEZ, regarding FARC logistics, supplies and weapons, as well as the seizures by authorities of a variety of weapons and materiel in 2008. These discussions occurred in the aftermath of a February 22, 2008, attack by five FARC guerillas on a Panamanian police patrol boat, and their subsequent capture in possession of substantial FARC weaponry and material.

Earlier this afternoon, CORDOBA-BERMUDEZ appeared before United States Circuit Court Judge DENNY CHIN, to whom the case was previously assigned and who has continued to preside over the case since his elevation to the Second Circuit, and pleaded guilty to Count One of the Indictment, which charges CORDOBA-BERMUDEZ with conspiring to provide material support and resources to the FARC. This offense carries a maximum sentence of fifteen years in prison. CORDOBA-BERMUDEZ is scheduled to be sentenced on February 9, 2011.

U.S. Attorney PREET BHARARA stated: "The 57th Front is one of the most violent elements of the FARC, comprised of a group of guerrillas and associates who kidnapped a U.S. citizen, procured weapons and explosives, and trafficked cocaine to fuel the FARC's terrorist activities. Today's guilty plea demonstrates our resolve to bring to justice not only the FARC's guerilla members, but also those people who enable the FARC's terrorist activities by providing logistical support."

Mr. BHARARA praised the investigative work of the Drug Enforcement Administration's (DEA) New York Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Strike Force, the Narco-Terrorism Group of the DEA's Bogota Country Office, the DEA's Panama City Country Office, the FBI's Extraterritorial Hostage Taking Squad in Miami, and the Department of Justice's Office of International Affairs. Mr. BHARARA also thanked the Colombian Navy, the Colombian National Police, the Colombia Attorney General's Office, and the Panamanian National Police for their assistance in the investigation.

The prosecution is being handled by the Office's Terrorism and International Narcotics Unit. Assistant United States Attorneys JEFFREY A. BROWN and REBECCA M. RICIGLIANO are in charge of the prosecution.

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