



United States Attorney
Southern District of New York

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CONTACT: U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
YUSILL SCRIBNER,
REBEKAH CARMICHAEL
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE
(212) 637-2600

DEA
GARRISON COURTNEY
OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS
(202) 307-7977

U.S. ANNOUNCES ARREST OF INTERNATIONAL ARMS DEALER
FOR CONSPIRACY TO KILL AMERICANS
AND RELATED TERRORISM CHARGES

MICHAEL J. GARCIA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, and KAREN P. TANDY, Administrator of the United States Drug Enforcement Administration ("DEA"), announced today the arrest of MONZER AL KASSAR, a/k/a "Abu Munawar," a/k/a "El Taous," ("KASSAR"), an international arms dealer charged with conspiring to sell millions of dollars worth of weapons to the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (the "FARC") -- a designated foreign terrorist organization -- to be used to kill Americans in Colombia. KASSAR, along with co-defendants TAREQ MOUSA AL GHAZI ("GHAZI") and LUIS FELIPE MORENO GODOY ("MORENO"), were arrested yesterday as they prepared to finalize the transaction to pay for the weapons. KASSAR was arrested on the U.S. charges by Spanish authorities in Madrid; simultaneously GHAZI and MORENO were arrested in Romania. According to the Indictment unsealed yesterday in Manhattan federal court:

Since the early 1970s, KASSAR, an international weapons trafficker, has been a ready source of weapons and military equipment for armed factions engaged in violent conflicts around the world. KASSAR has provided weapons and military equipment to such factions in Nicaragua, Brazil, Cyprus, Bosnia, Croatia, Somalia, Iran, and Iraq, among other countries. Some of these factions have included known terrorist organizations, such as the Palestinian Liberation Front ("PLF"), the goals of which included attacking United States interests and United States nationals.

To carry out his weapons-trafficking business, KASSAR developed an international network of criminal associates, including co-defendants GHAZI and MORENO, as well as front companies and bank accounts in various countries, including the United Kingdom, Spain, Syria, Iraq, Poland, Bulgaria, and Romania. Additionally, KASSAR has engaged in money-laundering transactions in bank accounts throughout the world to disguise the illicit nature of his criminal proceeds.

Between February 2006 and May 2007, KASSAR, GHAZI, and MORENO agreed to sell to the FARC millions of dollars worth of weapons -- including thousands of machine guns, millions of rounds of ammunition, rocket-propelled grenade launchers ("RPGs"), and surface-to-air missile systems ("SAMs"). During a series of recorded telephone calls, emails, and in-person meetings, KASSAR, GHAZI, and MORENO agreed to sell the weapons to two confidential sources working with the DEA (the "CSs"), who represented that they were acquiring these weapons for the FARC, with the specific understanding that the weapons were to be used to attack United States helicopters in Colombia.

During their consensually recorded meetings, KASSAR, GHAZI, and MORENO provided the CSs with, among other things: (1) a schematic of the vessel to be used to transport the weapons; (2) specifications for the SAMs they agreed to sell to the FARC; and (3) bank accounts in Spain and Lebanon that were ultimately used to conceal more than \$400,000 from DEA undercover accounts that the CSs represented, and KASSAR, GHAZI, and MORENO believed, were FARC drug proceeds for the weapons deal. During their meetings with the CSs, KASSAR, GHAZI, and MORENO reviewed Nicaraguan end-user certificates that were used to make the weapons deal appear legitimate. KASSAR also promised to provide the FARC with ton-quantities of C4 explosives, as well as expert trainers from Lebanon to teach the FARC how to effectively use C4 and improvised explosive devices (commonly referred to as "IEDs"). In addition, KASSAR offered to send a thousand men to fight with the FARC against United States military officers in Colombia.

The Indictment announced today charges KASSAR, GHAZI, and MORENO with four separate terrorism offenses:

- Count One: Conspiracy to provide material support or resources to a designated foreign terrorist organization, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 2339B;
- Count Two: Conspiracy to kill United States

nationals, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 2332(b);

- Count Three: Conspiracy to kill United States officers or employees, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 1114 and 1117; and
- Count Four: Conspiracy to acquire and use an anti-aircraft missile, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 2332g.

In addition, KASSAR and MORENO are charged in Count Five with money laundering, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1956.

If convicted of Count One, the defendants each face maximum sentences of 15 years' imprisonment. If convicted of Counts Two through Four, the defendants each face maximum sentences of life imprisonment, and a mandatory minimum sentence of 25 years' imprisonment for Count Four. Finally, if convicted of Count Five, KASSAR and MORENO each face maximum sentences of 20 years' imprisonment.

The international law enforcement operation announced today was the result of cooperation between the United States Drug Enforcement Administration (the "DEA"), the Spanish National Police, and the Romanian Border Police.

Mr. GARCIA praised the investigative efforts of the DEA, the Spanish National Police, and the Romanian Border Police, as well as thanked the Nicaraguan National Police for their support. Mr. GARCIA also thanked the Counterterrorism Division of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

"MONZER AL KASSAR has long been one of the most prolific arms dealers in the world. He has supported terrorists and insurgents by providing them with high-powered weapons that have fueled the most violent conflicts of the last three decades," said U.S. Attorney MICHAEL J. GARCIA. "Today, KASSAR and two of his criminal associates face charges for agreeing to arm a terrorist organization whose aim it was to kill American citizens."

"MONZER AL KASSAR commands a global munitions empire, arming and funding insurgents and terrorists across the globe, particularly those who wish to harm Americans," said DEA Administrator KAREN P. TANDY. "He operates in the shadows, the

silent partner behind the business of death and terror. KASSAR's capture is a testament to DEA's unique investigative skills and broad reach of its international intelligence network."

Assistant United States Attorneys BOYD M. JOHNSON III, LESLIE C. BROWN, and BRENDAN R. McGUIRE are in charge of the prosecutions.

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

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