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**LEADER OF COLOMBIAN TERRORIST ORGANIZATION AUC
PLEADS GUILTY TO NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING CHARGES**

MICHAEL J. GARCIA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, and MICHELE M. LEONHART, the Acting Administrator of the United States Drug Enforcement Administration ("DEA") announced the guilty plea of DIEGO FERNANDO MURILLO-BEJARANO, a/k/a "Don Berna," a/k/a "Don Bernardo," a/k/a "Adolfo Paz," the top leader of the Autodefensas Unidas De Colombia ("AUC"), a former Colombian paramilitary group designated by the United States Department of State as a foreign terrorist organization. MURILLO-BEJARANO pleaded guilty today before United States District Judge RICHARD M. BERMAN to conspiring to import multi-ton quantities of cocaine into the United States. According to the Indictment previously unsealed in Manhattan federal court and statements made during MURILLO-BEJARANO's guilty plea proceeding:

The AUC was a paramilitary organization based in Colombia which was engaged in warfare with the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia ("FARC"), Colombia's main guerilla group. To support its terrorist paramilitary activities and to enrich its leaders, the AUC was involved in narcotics trafficking, and was responsible for the importation of multi-ton quantities of cocaine into the United States. The AUC was involved in overseeing the transportation of cocaine by sea -- on board speedboats and cargo vessels -- from Colombia to the United States, either directly or through third countries.

MURILLO-BEJARANO held the title of Inspector General of the AUC, but was the de facto leader of the organization, in charge of its narcotics-trafficking activities, including all of its cocaine transportation and financial operations. MURILLO-BEJARANO maintained his power in the AUC in part from the

proceeds of his drug-trafficking activities.

The cocaine shipped to the United States by the AUC generated millions of dollars in New York and other U.S. cities. At the direction of individuals working under the supervision of MURILLO-BEJARANO's organization, these sums were placed in bags or suitcases and exchanged at pre-arranged locations. The purpose of these transfers was to allow the conspiracy to repatriate narcotics proceeds to Colombia while concealing the illicit nature of the funds.

Colombian authorities, pursuant to a request for a provisional arrest from the United States, arrested MURILLO-BEJARANO in Colombia on May 27, 2005. MURILLO-BEJARANO was extradited to the United States approximately three years later, on May 13, 2008.

Earlier this morning, MURILLO-BEJARANO pled guilty to Count One of the Indictment, which charges him with conspiring to import into the United States ton-quantities of cocaine, and conspiring to distribute this cocaine with the knowledge and intent that it would be imported into the United States. This offense carries a mandatory minimum sentence of ten years in prison and a maximum sentence of life in prison. As part of its extradition request, however, the United States has previously provided assurances to the government of Colombia that it will not seek a life sentence for the defendant, but instead will ask for a prison term of years. The plea agreement between the United States Attorney's Office and MURILLO-BEJARANO includes a stipulated sentencing Guidelines range of 324 months to 405 months in prison. MURILLO-BEJARANO is scheduled to be sentenced on December 18, 2008.

Mr. GARCIA praised the investigative work of the DEA's New York Drug Enforcement Task Force -- which includes agents and officers of the DEA, the New York City Police Department and the New York State Police -- and the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, as well as the DEA's Colombia and Mexico Offices, the United States Marshals Service, the Colombian National Police, and the Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad for their assistance in the case.

Mr. GARCIA stated, "Today, a month after arriving in New York to face United States charges, Don Berna admitted to agreeing to import tons of cocaine into the United States. His plea is an important milestone in the Government's effort to combat narco-terrorism, and we look forward to continuing to work with our Colombian law enforcement partners to dismantle

organizations that finance terrorism with the proceeds of drug trafficking."

"The extradition and guilty plea of Diego Murillo-Bejarano represent a monumental defeat to the leadership of the AUC," said DEA Acting Administrator MICHELE M. LEONHART. "It further demonstrates the strength in partnership between the DEA and Colombian law enforcement. American and Colombian communities are safer with the removal of this notorious drug kingpin."

The case is being prosecuted by the Office's International Narcotics Trafficking Unit. Assistant United States Attorneys ERIC SNYDER and ANJAN SAHNI are in charge of the prosecution.

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