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**FLORIDA DOCTOR CONVICTED OF CONSPIRING AND
ATTEMPTING TO SUPPORT AL QAEDA**

MICHAEL J. GARCIA, United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced that RAFIQ SABIR was convicted today of conspiracy to provide material support or resources to the al Qaeda terrorist organization, and of attempting to provide material support or resources to al Qaeda, after pledging an oath of loyalty to al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden in a May 2005 ceremony secretly recorded by an undercover FBI agent.

The evidence at trial proved that SABIR conspired with his good friend, TARIK SHAH, to provide martial arts training and medical assistance to al Qaeda, through a man whom they believed to be a recruiter for the terrorist organization. The recruiter was in fact an FBI agent, acting undercover, who recorded numerous conversations involving SABIR and SHAH, including the May 2005 ceremony in the Bronx. During that meeting, SABIR and SHAH pledged "bayat," or allegiance, to Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda, and agreed to provide SABIR's medical expertise and SHAH's martial arts expertise to train al Qaeda fighters.

From September 2003 through May 2005, SHAH engaged in multiple meetings and conversations, first with a confidential source (the "CS") and later with the FBI undercover agent (the "UC"). In these conversations, the vast majority of which were recorded, SHAH discussed his desire and intent to aid al Qaeda, and repeatedly discussed his friend, who was a doctor, as being someone who shared his desire. For example, SHAH repeatedly indicated his desire to train Muslim "brothers" in the martial arts to help them wage jihad, regularly discussed his desire to find people who were willing to press the fight, and, when meeting the UC for the first time, offered himself and SABIR as a "package." SHAH also took steps to find locations where jihad training could be conducted and weapons could be machined.

SHAH told the UC and the CS of his discussions with SABIR regarding their desire to move to Afghanistan in 1998, when it was under the control of the Taliban, and of his intention to attend terrorist training camps there. Materials recovered from SHAH included the names and telephone numbers of other individuals who had gone overseas to attend such training camps, including Seifullah Chapman -- a member of the Virginia Jihad Network who was convicted in the Eastern District of Virginia in 2004 for providing material support to the Lashkar-e-Taiba foreign terrorist organization.

At the meeting on May 20, 2005, in the presence of the UC and under the impression that the UC had the authority of al Qaeda, SABIR and SHAH took "bayat" -- pledging an oath of loyalty to al Qaeda, and committing themselves to the path of Holy War, to the oath of secrecy, and to abide by the directives of al Qaeda and its leaders, including Osama bin Laden and Ayman al Zawahiri. During that discussion, SABIR stated that he and SHAH had been "talking about this for a long time." SABIR also told the UC that he would soon be returning to Saudi Arabia for two years to work at a hospital in Riyadh, and that he enjoyed extraordinary freedom of movement within that country. Evidence at trial established that al Qaeda has engaged in a long-running terror campaign within Saudi Arabia that began in May 2003. Also at the May 2005 meeting, SABIR wrote down his telephone numbers in code, and gave them to the UC for the UC to provide to the "brothers" in Saudi Arabia, inviting them to call him and expressing his desire to meet them.

SABIR faces a maximum sentence of 30 years' imprisonment, a maximum fine of \$250,000, and a maximum term of supervised release of three years. SABIR is scheduled to be sentenced by United States District Judge LORETTA A. PRESKA on September 12, 2007, at 4:00 p.m.

Mr. GARCIA praised the efforts of the New York Joint Terrorism Task Force, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the New York City Police Department, for their extraordinary efforts in the investigation of this case.

Assistant United States Attorneys JENNIFER G. RODGERS, VICTOR L. HOU, and KARL METZNER are in charge of the prosecution.

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