



**United States Attorney
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**U.S. ANNOUNCES EXTRADITION OF HIGH-RANKING MEMBER
OF MEXICAN DRUG-TRAFFICKING ORGANIZATION**

MICHAEL J. GARCIA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, JOHN P. GILBRIDE, the Special Agent-in-Charge of the New York Office of the United States Drug Enforcement Administration, and SALVATORE DALESSANDRO, the Acting Special Agent-in-Charge of the New York Office of the Department of Homeland Security's U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, announced the extradition late yesterday of MANUEL CAMPAS-MEDINA, a high-ranking member of a Mexico-based international drug-trafficking organization.

CAMPAS-MEDINA had been in Mexican custody pending extradition since July 2003, when "Operation Trifecta," a hemisphere-wide investigation conducted by the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York, the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force, the United States Department of Justice, the Drug Enforcement Administration ("DEA"), the Department of Homeland Security's U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement ("ICE"), and state and local law enforcement agencies in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles and Arizona, dismantled the drug-trafficking organization. Operation Trifecta also involved the efforts of DEA offices in Mexico City, Hermosillo, Mexico, and Bogota, Colombia, as well as the Mexican

Attorney General's Office and the Colombian National Police.

Over the course of the year-long investigation, a federal grand jury in Manhattan returned seven Indictments charging 43 individuals with narcotics trafficking and firearms offenses; over 200 defendants were charged nationwide. Aside from CAMPAS-MEDINA, all the other Operation Trifecta defendants who were arrested and prosecuted in this District have been convicted at trial or have entered guilty pleas. The defendants have received sentences as high as 55 years' imprisonment. In all, Operation Trifecta resulted in the seizure of over 500 kilograms of cocaine in the New York area alone.

CAMPAS-MEDINA is alleged to have held a leadership position in an organization which transported cocaine from Mexico to New York in hidden compartments in vehicles. According to the Indictment, on July 12, 2003, 56 kilograms of cocaine were discovered concealed in a pickup truck that had been driven to Queens by one of CAMPAS-MEDINA's co-conspirators. Other searches of CAMPAS-MEDINA's co-conspirators yielded \$600,000 in narcotics proceeds and three firearms.

Mr. GARCIA praised the outstanding investigative work of the DEA's New York Drug Enforcement Task Force, which includes agents and officers of the DEA, ICE's New York Office, the New York City Police Department, and the New York State Police. Mr. GARCIA also thanked the Office of International Affairs of the Criminal Division of the United States Department of Justice, and thanked the Mexican Attorney General's Office and Foreign Ministry as well as the United States Marshals Service's Southern District of New York and Mexico City Offices for their assistance in the arrest and extradition of CAMPAS-MEDINA.

CAMPAS-MEDINA is expected to be arraigned in Manhattan federal court later this week.

Operation Trifecta was led by the United States Attorney's Office's International Narcotics Trafficking Unit, which is also conducting the prosecution of CAMPAS-MEDINA. Assistant United States Attorneys ANIRUDH BANSAL and ERIC SNYDER are in charge of the prosecution.

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

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