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**FORMER COLOMBIAN NAVAL PETTY OFFICER EXTRADITED
TO UNITED STATES FOR SELLING NAVAL POSITIONING
CHARTS TO COCAINE TRAFFICKERS**

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 ("DEA"), PETER J. SMITH, the Special Agent-in-Charge of the New York Office of the Department of Homeland Security's U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement ("ICE"), and RAYMOND W. KELLY, the Police Commissioner of the City of New York, announced the extradition of OTONIEL RICARDO CABARCAS AVENDANO on charges stemming from a conspiracy to sell navigation charts purporting to detail the locations of Colombian and United States Naval and Coast Guard vessels to narcotics importers seeking to avoid interdiction by law enforcement on the high seas.

AVENDANO, 45, who arrived in New York last night, is expected to be arraigned in Manhattan federal court later today. Co-defendant EDUARDO UEJBE JARAMILLO, 55, who was extradited from Colombia and arrived in New York on August 19, 2008, was

arraigned and ordered detained. According to the Indictment and other documents filed in the case:

Beginning in the late 2002, early 2003, JARAMILLO led his co-defendants to solicit information from co-conspirators regarding the positions of Naval and Coast Guard vessels of the Colombia and United States governments. Until October 2007, the date the Indictment was filed, AVENDANO, JARAMILLO, and others sold the information to cocaine-trafficking organizations, which were then able to plan secure maritime export routes for their cocaine while avoiding detection and interdiction of their narcotics shipments.

These trafficking organizations generally transported cocaine from Colombia to trans-shipment points in the Caribbean Sea and Central America. Thousands of kilograms of cocaine were distributed, large quantities of which ultimately were imported to the United States and other countries, where it was sold for tens of millions of dollars.

AVENDANO, a/k/a "Oto," was a former petty officer in the Colombian navy, based in Cartagena, Colombia. AVENDANO was primarily responsible for obtaining information regarding the positions of law enforcement and naval vessels, including navigational charts, and conducting the sale of such information in exchange for large sums of money.

JARAMILLO, a/k/a "El Condor," a military contractor, was the proprietor of a company based in Cartagena, Colombia, which contracts with the Colombian coast guard to provide uniforms. Through his relationship with the Colombian coast guard, JARAMILLO was able to create and maintain relationships with high-ranking officials of the Colombian navy and permitted to gain access to confidential information. JARAMILLO also befriended various Colombian naval officers and forged direct relationships with numerous narcotics trafficking organizations, and on their behalf purchased vessel-positioning information.

AVENDANO, JARAMILLO, and three co-defendants, DIEGO EGIDIO PINZON GOMEZ, RAMEL ANTONIO MARRUGO CASTRO, and JORGE ARTURO SOSA ARGOTE, are charged in the Indictment filed in Manhattan federal court. AVENDANO and JARAMILLO are charged with conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute narcotics while onboard a vessel subject to the jurisdiction of the United States, and with conspiracy to import narcotics into the United States.

If convicted, AVENDANO and JARAMILLO each face a maximum sentence on each count of life in prison and a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years in prison. However, pursuant to

agreement, the United States has provided assurances to Colombia that AVENDANO and JARAMILLO will not be required to serve life sentences.

The case is assigned to United States District Judge JOHN G. KOELTL. The next conference in this matter is scheduled for November 7, 2008, at 10 a.m.

Mr. GARCIA praised the investigative work of the New York Drug Enforcement Task Force, which is comprised of agents and officers from the Drug Enforcement Administration, the New York Police Department and the New York State Police. Mr. GARCIA expressed his gratitude to ICE, Colombian Naval Intelligence, Naval Criminal Investigative Service, and the United States Coast Guard for their efforts in the investigation. Mr. GARCIA thanked the United States Department of Justice Criminal Division's Office of International Affairs for their involvement in the extradition process.

Assistant United States Attorneys GLEN G. MCGORTY, JEFFREY A. BROWN, and MICHAEL BOSWORTH and are in charge of the prosecution, which is being handled by the Office's International Narcotics Trafficking Unit.

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

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