



Department of Justice

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TWO COLOMBIAN MEN PLEAD GUILTY TO ALIEN SMUGGLING AND CONSPIRING TO SUPPORT THE FARC

Five Convictions To Date Stemming From ICE Sting Operation

WASHINGTON – Two defendants have pleaded guilty to charges of attempting to provide material support to a foreign terrorist organization and alien smuggling, Assistant Attorney General Alice S. Fisher of the Criminal Division and Assistant Attorney General Kenneth L. Wainstein of the National Security Division announced today.

Jose Tito Libio Ulloa Melo (Ulloa), 45, of Bogota, Colombia, and Jorge De Los Reyes Bautista Martinez (Bautista), 47, of Bogota, each entered guilty pleas today before Judge Joan A. Lenard of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Florida. Ulloa pleaded guilty to conspiracy to provide material support or resources to the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC, which is a State Department designated foreign terrorist organization. Bautista pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit alien smuggling and one count of bringing aliens to the United States for profit.

Ulloa and Bautista were arrested in Bogota on Jan. 26, 2006, and extradited to Florida on March 19, 2007, and Feb. 20, 2007, respectively, after working with U.S. government undercover informants as part of a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) sting operation. The undercover agents posed as FARC operatives seeking illicit travel to Miami to launder FARC money from the United States to Colombia.

Ulloa admitted that in September and October of 2005, he met with undercover informants posing as FARC members seeking to travel to the United States from Colombia in order to launder money for the FARC. Ulloa told the informants that he and his associates would take charge of smuggling the travelers onto their flight out of Bogota, a service he claimed to have provided in the past.

Ulloa introduced the informants to his airport security contact, Luis Alfredo Daza Morales, who offered to arrange an entire team of Colombian airport immigration officials to move the informants through immigration without inspection. For added security, Ulloa and his co-conspirators also obtained fraudulent Colombian immigration entry stamps, thereby creating the appearance that the holder of the passport had legitimately arrived in Colombia from Spain. Ulloa and his co-conspirators also agreed to run the names on the passports through official

databases to determine whether they had been flagged by INTERPOL.

Bautista admitted to conspiring to smuggle aliens and bringing, or attempting to bring, an illegal alien from Colombia to the United States for private financial gain. In November 2005, Bautista arranged and facilitated travel for a cooperating government informant, who posed as a Colombian national seeking to enter the United States via Bogota's El Dorado International Airport. Bautista knew that his co-conspirators had provided the informant with a fraudulent Spanish passport. Nonetheless, he acted as an intermediary in the smuggling scheme and took responsibility for the traveler's departure through the Bogota airport. He introduced the informant to his airport immigration contact, offered to obtain boarding passes on his behalf, and offered to secure a Colombian passport and visa for him. Bautista admitted that he helped enable the informant to board a flight and arrive at the Miami International Airport later that evening carrying the fraudulent Spanish passport. Bautista was subsequently paid in cash for his smuggling services.

Ulloa and Bautista face up to 15 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. Sentencing before Judge Lenard is scheduled for Jan. 7, 2008. Ulloa and Bautista are among two of 10 individuals indicted by a Miami federal grand jury on terrorism, alien smuggling, and money laundering charges on Jan. 3, 2006. Three other co-defendants in the case have pleaded guilty. Trial for the remaining defendants is set to begin on Jan. 22, 2008.

The case was investigated by the Office of the ICE Attaché in Bogota, Colombia. Trial Attorney Brian Skaret of the Domestic Security Section of the Department of Justice prosecuted the case. Support was provided by the Justice Department's Office of International Affairs' Office of the Judicial Attaché in Colombia. The Department's National Security Division provided assistance to the prosecution, and Assistant U.S. Attorney William White of the Southern District of Florida served as local counsel on the case. Valuable support was also provided by Colombian authorities.

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