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BRITISH NATIONAL SENTENCED TO 15 MONTHS IN PRISON FOR CONSPIRACY TO COMMIT VISA FRAUD

WASHINGTON – A U.K. citizen residing in St. Cloud, Fla., has been sentenced to 15 months in prison for conspiracy to commit visa fraud, Assistant Attorney General Alice S. Fisher of the Criminal Division and U.S. Attorney Robert E. O'Neill for the Middle District of Florida announced today.

Michael J. Leggett, 52, was sentenced today by Judge Gregory A. Presnell of the Middle District of Florida in Orlando. Judge Presnell also ordered Leggett to serve three months in community confinement, three months in home detention, and three years of supervised release after completing his sentence. In addition, Leggett has agreed to pay restitution to the victims, the amount of which will be determined at a hearing set for Feb. 28, 2008. He is also subject to removal from the United States as a result of his conviction.

At his plea hearing on Aug. 24, 2007, Leggett admitted that he submitted fraudulent documentation in support of his own applications for U.S. visas and lawful permanent residence - including a false lease for a non-existent U.S. company, altered advertisements for a failed U.K. company, and an altered incorporation document for the same U.K. company. Leggett further admitted to filing at least 12 fraudulent investor visa applications on behalf of U.K. citizens who were clients of Royal Development, a Florida company Leggett controlled. Royal Development misled U.K. clients with claims of providing a lawful means of residing in the United States as corporate investors, but under Leggett's direction resorted to fraud in many instances when the proposed investments failed.

The case was investigated by the Diplomatic Security Service of the Department of State and prosecuted by Trial Attorney Nancy Oliver of the Domestic Security Section of the Criminal Division, and Assistant U.S. Attorney Bruce Hinshelwood for the Middle District of Florida.

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