Mexican, U.S. Women Leading Law Enforcement Efforts Against Transnational Crime

December 11, 2013

U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration

WASHINGTON, DC (rushPRnews) 12/11/13 — DEA Administrator Michele M. Leonhart and Preet Bharara, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, today announced that IOANNIS VIGLAKIS, a/k/a "Pablo," pled guilty yesterday in Manhattan federal court to attempting to provide material support to the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia ("FARC"), a Colombian terrorist organization. VIGLAKIS, a citizen of Greece, was arrested in Panama City, Panama, in coordination with Panamanian authorities during August 2012. He waived extradition and was subsequently turned over to the custody of the United States. VIGLAKIS pled guilty before U.S. District Judge Katherine B. Forrest.

"This investigation clearly demonstrates DEA's unique ability to disrupt and dismantle the arms-trafficking networks that supply weapons to the most

significant global narco-terror organizations," Leonhart said. "DEA will continue to aggressively pursue international arms dealers and narco-terrorists who are focused on harming our nation's security."

Manhattan U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara said: "By providing functioning rocket-propelled grenade launchers and other military-grade weapons to an individual he believed to be a FARC associate, Ioannis Viglakis was attempting to arm a known terrorist organization that he understood would use those weapons against Americans and Colombians."

According to the Indictment previously unsealed in this case:

Beginning in November 2011, VIGLAKIS had a series of meetings with a DEA confidential source (the "CS") who represented himself to be an associate of the FARC. During those meetings, which took place in Europe and Central America, the CS informed VIGLAKIS that he was seeking weapons for use by the FARC to attack American forces in Colombia.

VIGLAKIS offered to provide the FARC with functional, bona fide, military-grade weapons – including assault rifles, rocket-propelled grenade ("RPG") launchers and surface-to-air missiles – in exchange for cocaine and cash. During the meetings, VIGLAKIS and the CS also discussed the FARC's use of these weapons to fight the Colombian and American governments, including by shooting down American aircraft in Colombia.

During the following months, VIGLAKIS indicated that he would provide the CS with several RPG launchers as a sample. On July 18, 2012, VIGLAKIS successfully arranged for the delivery in Europe of six live RPGs and three working RPG launchers, which were received by a DEA undercover agent.

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VIGLAKIS, 53, pled guilty to one count of attempting to provide material support to the FARC. He faces a maximum sentence of 15 years in prison, and is scheduled to be sentenced by Judge Forrest on April 11, 2014, at 11:00 a.m.

Mr. Bharara praised the outstanding work of the Special Operations Division of the DEA, as well as the DEA Panama Country Office, the DEA Madrid Country Office, and the DEA Copenhagen Country Office. Mr. Bharara also thanked the U.S. Department of Justice Office of International Affairs and National Security Division, the U.S. Department of State, and the Government of the Republic of Panama.

This case is being handled by the Office's Terrorism and International Narcotics Unit. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Christian R. Everdell, Aimee Hector, and Michael Lockard are in charge of the prosecution.

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