



Department of Justice

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Five Individuals Arrested, Two Contracting Companies Charged in Bribery Conspiracy Related to Department of Defense Contracts in Afghanistan

WASHINGTON — Two U.S. military personnel, four Department of Defense (DOD) contractors and two contracting companies have been charged with bribery and conspiracy arising out of their conduct in Afghanistan in 2004 and 2005. Four individuals were arrested on Aug. 25, 2008, and one individual was arrested yesterday on charges contained in an indictment returned on Aug. 21, 2008, and unsealed today in U.S. District Court in Chicago.

Maj. Christopher P. West, a resident of Chicago who served with the Illinois National Guard at Bagram Airfield (BAF), Afghanistan, as the head of base operations, was arrested Aug. 25 in Chicago on bribery and conspiracy charges. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Patrick W. Boyd, a resident of Rockledge, Fla., and a contracting officer at BAF, was arrested yesterday on bribery and conspiracy charges.

The indictment also charges bribery and conspiracy against BAF contractors Assad John Ramin and Tahir Ramin; Noor Alam and his company, Northern Reconstruction Organization (NRO); and Abdul Qudoos Bahkshi and his company, Naweed Bahkshi Company (NBC). John and Tahir Ramin are residents of both Pennsylvania and Afghanistan. Alam and Qudoos are residents of Afghanistan. The companies, NRO and NBC, are also located in Afghanistan. Tahir Ramin, Alam, and Qudoos were arrested Aug. 25 as they entered the United States at O'Hare Airport in Chicago. The Chicago defendants were arraigned today before District Court Judge Samuel Der-Yeghiayan. An initial appearance for Boyd will be held in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Indiana.

According to the indictment, beginning in 2004, West, Boyd and a co-conspirator arranged the award of three DOD contracts worth more than \$1 million at BAF. The indictment alleges that the Ramins, who are brothers, paid West, Boyd and a co-conspirator \$30,000 in return for the

award of a contract to supply BAF with bunkers and barriers, cement structures used for force protection and perimeter walls. Likewise, Alam and NRO are alleged to have paid West, Boyd and a co-conspirator \$30,000 in return for the award of a contract to provide asphalt paving services at BAF. Qudoos and NBC are alleged to have paid West, Boyd and a co-conspirator \$30,000 in return for a second asphalt paving contract.

"We will aggressively prosecute individuals and companies who line their own pockets by corrupting the bidding process for base procurement in Afghanistan," said Thomas O. Barnett, Assistant Attorney General in charge of the Department's Antitrust Division. "These contracts were meant to protect U.S. soldiers serving their country, and we will not tolerate corruption that deprives the troops of the benefits of competitively-sourced goods and services."

"This case clearly demonstrates the effective cooperation between DOD investigative agencies and the shared dedication and fortitude our agents in the field have in pursuing these cases and bringing the guilty parties to justice," said Brig. Gen. Rodney Johnson, commanding general of the U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command. "Anyone who is contemplating putting themselves in a position where their selfishness and greed overtakes their honor and sense of duty to the nation and taxpayers they serve should beware. We will continue to thoroughly and doggedly investigate these types of allegations, and the findings will be turned over to the appropriate entity for prosecution."

"America's warfighters deserve the very best to perform their jobs and the taxpayers expect nothing less. Bribery and corruption within the military not only takes away precious dollars necessary for the dedicated American warfighter but it undermines the confidence of the American public who demand a military procurement system that spends their tax dollars wisely and responsibly. This investigation should serve as a warning for those intent on defrauding the U.S. military and American public that the Defense Criminal Investigative Service (DCIS) will pursue these crimes relentlessly," said Sharon E. Woods, the director of DCIS.

The individuals face up to 15 years in prison and a fine of \$250,000 for bribery, and up to five years in prison and a fine of \$250,000 for conspiracy. NRO and NBC face fines of up to \$500,000 for bribery and conspiracy.

Today's charges are an example of the Department of Justice's commitment to protect U.S. taxpayers from public procurement fraud through the National Procurement Fraud Task Force. The National Procurement Fraud Initiative announced in October 2006 is designed to promote the early detection, identification, prevention and prosecution of procurement fraud associated with the increase in contracting activity for national security and other government programs.

This case is part of an ongoing investigation being conducted by the Antitrust Division's National Criminal Enforcement Section (NCES) along with special agents of the DCIS, the U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command Division (Army CID), and Air Force Office of Special Investigations. Material assistance to the investigation was provided by Customs and Border

Protection, Field Operations in Chicago. Anyone with information concerning illegal conduct in the procurement of goods or services involving DOD contracts in Iraq or Afghanistan is urged to contact NCES at 202-307-6694 or antitrust.complaints@usdoj.gov; DCIS at 800-424-9098 or hotline@dodig.mil; or Army CID at www.cid.army.mil.

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