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Former Army Corps of Engineers Employee Sentenced to 20 Months in Prison for Accepting Bribes from Iraqi Contractors

WASHINGTON - A former employee of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers stationed in Baghdad, Iraq, was sentenced today in the Eastern District of Virginia to 20 months in prison for conspiring to receive bribes from Iraqi contractors involved in the U.S.-funded reconstruction efforts, announced Assistant Attorney General Lanny A. Breuer of the Justice Department's Criminal Division, U.S. Attorney Neil H. MacBride for the Eastern District of Virginia and Assistant Director in Charge James W. McJunkin of the FBI's Washington Field Office.

Thomas Aram Manok, 51, of Chantilly, Va., was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Anthony J. Trenga. In addition to his prison term, Manok was sentenced to three years of supervised release. Judge Trenga ordered a forfeiture hearing to be held on Jan. 13, 2012. Manok pleaded guilty on Sept. 19, 2011.

Manok admitted to using his official position to conspire with Iraqi contractors to accept cash bribes in exchange for recommending that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers approve contracts and other requests for payment submitted by the contractors to the U.S. government. According to court documents, in March and April 2010, Manok agreed to receive a \$10,000 payment from one such contractor who had been involved in constructing a kindergarten and girls' school in the Abu Ghraib neighborhood of Baghdad and had sought Manok's influence in having requests for payment approved by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. According to court documents, Manok was to receive an additional bribe payment from the contractor once the contractor's claim had been approved. Manok also admitted that he intended to conceal the payments from authorities by transferring them, via associates, from Iraq to Armenia.

This case was investigated by the FBI's Washington Field Office, the Department of Defense Office of the Inspector General, the Army Criminal Investigation Command and the Defense Criminal Investigative Service, as participants in the International Contract Corruption Task Force. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Paul J. Nathanson of the Eastern District of Virginia and Trial Attorney Mary Ann McCarthy of the Criminal Division's Fraud Section.

This prosecution is part of efforts underway by President Barack Obama's Financial Fraud Enforcement Task Force. President Obama established the interagency Financial Fraud Enforcement Task Force to wage an aggressive, coordinated and proactive effort to investigate and prosecute financial crimes. The task force includes representatives from a broad range of federal agencies, regulatory authorities, inspectors general and state and local law enforcement who, working together, bring to bear a powerful array of criminal and civil enforcement resources. The task force is working to improve efforts across the federal executive branch, and with state and local partners, to investigate and prosecute significant financial crimes, ensure just and effective punishment for those who perpetrate financial crimes, combat discrimination in the lending and financial markets, and recover proceeds for victims of financial crimes. For more information about the task force visit: www.stopfraud.gov.

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Criminal Division