



U.S. Department of Justice

*United States Attorney
District of Maryland*

Rod J. Rosenstein
United States Attorney

Vickie E. LeDuc
Public Information Officer

36 S. Charles Street
Fourth Floor
Baltimore, Maryland 21201-2692

410-209-4800
TTY/TDD: 410-962-4462
410-209-4885
FAX 410-962-3091
Vickie.LeDuc@usdoj.gov

May 10, 2007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
<http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/md>

**CONTACT AUSA VICKIE E. LEDUC or
MARCIA MURPHY at (410) 209-4885**

**SRI LANKAN MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO CONSPIRACY TO PROVIDE
MATERIAL SUPPORT TO A FOREIGN TERRORIST ORGANIZATION
AND ATTEMPTED EXPORT OF ARMS**

*Aided Tamil Tiger Terrorists in the Attempted Purchase of Surface to Air Missiles, Night Vision
Devices, Machine Guns and State of the Art Firearms*

Baltimore, Maryland - Thirunavukarasu Varatharasa, age 37, a citizen of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, pleaded guilty today to conspiracy to provide material support to a designated foreign terrorist organization and attempted exportation of arms and munitions, announced United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Rod J. Rosenstein.

United States Attorney Rod J. Rosenstein said, "Mr. Varatharasa is the last defendant to be convicted in this plot to attempt to obtain military weapons in violation of American law. We are committed to using all available legal tools to prevent terrorism."

"Today's case reflects ICE's commitment to keeping U.S. weapons and technology out of the hands of terrorists," said Julie Myers, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Assistant Secretary. "Every day our Arms and Strategic Technology Investigations are targeting profiteers who jeopardize national and international security by selling critical weapons and technologies. Those engaged in these illicit activities share a significant burden of responsibility for the instability and violence that can come from the sale of these items."

"Combating terrorism, as well as protecting our critical technology, is a priority for the Defense Criminal Investigative Service. In working with our partners in law enforcement, DCIS is committed to ensuring our weapons and DoD technology is secure," said Geoff Cherrington, the Special Agent in Charge for the DCIS Mid-Atlantic Field Office.

Special Agent in Charge (SAC) William D. Chase, of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Baltimore Field Office, said "The disruption of the supply chain of this organization should reassure the public that the U.S. Government is committed to dismantling terrorist groups worldwide. The FBI will continue to work to prevent any person from using the United States to raise funds or procure arms to commit acts of terrorism."

According to the plea agreement, from April to September 29, 2006 Varatharasa

conspired with Haji Subandi, Haniffa Osman and Erick Wotulo to export state-of-the-art firearms, machine guns and ammunition, surface to air missiles, night vision goggles and other military weapons to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (Tamil Tigers) operating within Sri Lanka, to be used to fight against Sri Lankan government forces. The conspirators contacted an undercover business located in Maryland about the sale of military weapons. The defendants aided in the acquisition and proposed delivery of military technology to the Tamil Tigers by requesting price quotes and negotiating the purchases. Subandi sent an itemized list of 53 military weapons, including sniper rifles, machine guns and grenade launchers that he wanted to acquire for the Tamil Tigers.

On September 25, 2006 Varatharasa and Osman arrived in Saipan to meet with undercover officers and inspect the weaponry that had been ordered on behalf of the Tamil Tigers. They were transported to Guam where, the next day, Varatharasa and Osman inspected various machine guns, sniper rifles and ammunition. They also inspected two surface to air missiles and agreed to communicate to others within the Tamil Tigers regarding the availability and pricing of the missiles. After the inspection was completed, Varatharasa and Osman agreed to arrange for the transfer of money into an undercover bank account in Maryland as payment for the arms and munitions. Varatharasa also purchased food and provisions for his trip from Guam to deliver the weaponry to the Tamil Tigers at a location in the Indian Ocean off the coast of Sri Lanka.

On September 29, 2006 Wotulo arrived in Guam. Varatharasa, Wotulo and Osman met with undercover officers in Guam and discussed current and future sales of weapons to the Tamil Tigers, and were arrested.

Varatharasa faces a maximum penalty of 15 years in prison for conspiracy to provide material support to a foreign terrorist organization and 10 years in prison for attempted exportation of arms and munitions. U.S. District Judge Catherine C. Blake has not yet set a sentencing date.

Haji Subandi, age 69, a citizen of the Republic of Indonesia, pleaded guilty on March 8, 2007 and faces a maximum penalty of 15 years in prison for conspiracy to provide material support to a foreign terrorist organization; 20 years in prison on each of two counts of money laundering; and 10 years in prison for attempted exportation of arms and munitions. Judge Blake has scheduled Subandi's sentencing for June 15, 2007 at 10:30 a.m.

Erick Wotulo, age 59, a citizen of the Republic of Indonesia, and a retired Indonesian Marine Corps General, and Haniffa Bin Osman, age 55, a citizen of the Republic of Singapore, both pleaded guilty and face a maximum sentence of 15 years in prison for conspiracy to provide material support and 20 years in prison for money laundering. Judge Blake has scheduled Wotulo's sentencing for May 25, 2007 at 10:00 a.m. and Osman's sentencing for June 25, 2007 at 9:15 a.m.

Founded in 1976, the Tamil Tigers has advocated the violent overthrow of the Sri Lankan government, employing acts of violence, including suicide bombings, against both civilian and military targets. Approximately 200 such attacks have been attributed to the Tamil Tigers to date. The Tamil Tigers relies heavily upon supporters throughout the world to raise and launder money, acquire intelligence and purchase military use technology. The U.S. Department of State designated the Tamil Tigers as a Foreign Terrorist Organization in 1997.

As such, the Tamil Tigers cannot legally raise money or procure operational equipment in the United States.

United States Attorney Rod J. Rosenstein praised the U.S Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the Defense Criminal Investigative Service, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Baltimore City Police Department for their investigative work. Mr. Rosenstein thanked Assistant U.S. Attorneys for the District of Maryland James G. Warwick, and Harry M. Gruber, who are prosecuting the case; and Assistant U.S. Attorney Harvey Eisenberg, Chief of National Security, who is supervising the case.