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## Chicago Cousins Plead Guilty to Conspiracy to Provide Material Support to Terrorists

WASHINGTON – Zubair Ahmed, 29, and Khaleel Ahmed, 28, both residents of Chicago, pleaded guilty today in the Northern District of Ohio to conspiracy to provide material support to terrorists in connection with their efforts to travel abroad in order to murder or maim U.S. military forces in Iraq or Afghanistan.

Today's guilty pleas were announced by Matthew Olsen, Deputy Assistant Attorney General for National Security; William J. Edwards, U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Ohio; and C. Frank Figliuzzi, Special Agent in Charge, Cleveland Division of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

Zubair Ahmed and his cousin Khaleel Ahmed each pleaded guilty before Chief U.S. District Judge James G. Carr in Toledo, Ohio, to a one-count, superseding information charging them with conspiracy to provide material support and resources, including the defendants themselves as personnel, to terrorists in violation of Title 18, U.S.C. Section 2339A. At sentencing, each defendant faces a statutory maximum of 15 years imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine, followed by three years of supervised release.

According to the superseding information and other information entered into the court record today:

The criminal conspiracy involving Zubair and Khaleel Ahmed began no later than April 1, 2004, and continued until their arrests on Feb. 21, 2007. As part of the conspiracy, the defendants made preparations to travel overseas in order to engage in acts that would result in the murder or maiming of U.S. military forces in either Iraq or Afghanistan. On or about May 21, 2004, the defendants traveled to Cairo, Egypt, with the intent of engaging in acts that would result in the murder or maiming of U.S. military forces in Iraq or Afghanistan.

After their return from Egypt, on or about July 4, 2004, Zubair and Khaleel Ahmed discussed, sought and received instruction on firearms from another individual in Cleveland. The defendants also sought and discussed training in counter-surveillance techniques and sniper rifles with this individual. Specifically, defendant Zubair Ahmed discussed his desire to learn how to use and move with a .50-caliber machine gun.

As part of the conspiracy, the defendants also communicated with each other using code words and in a foreign language to disguise their preparations and plans to engage in acts abroad that would result in the murder or maiming of U.S. military forces in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Furthermore, Zubair and Khaleel Ahmed researched the purchase of firearms, methods of obtaining firearms instruction (including at least one visit to a firing range) and methods of obtaining instruction in gunsmithing. In addition, the defendants collected and distributed videos of attacks on U.S. military forces overseas, manuals on military tactics and military manuals on weaponry.

"Today's guilty pleas should send a strong message to individuals who would use this country as a platform to plot attacks against U.S. military personnel in Iraq and Afghanistan," said Matthew Olsen, Deputy Assistant Attorney General for National Security. "This case also underscores the need for continued vigilance in identifying and dismantling extremist plots that develop within our nation."



William J. Edwards, U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Ohio, said: "These guilty pleas are testament to the hard work and dedication of all the federal, state and local law enforcement officials who have spent years investigating this case and to the tireless efforts and perseverance of an extremely talented team of federal prosecutors who, with their law enforcement partners, keep this country safe from terrorists."

C. Frank Figliuzzi, Special Agent in Charge, Cleveland Division, FBI, said: "This case is an example of our continued efforts to detect terrorist planning and to prevent acts of terrorism before they occur. Through close cooperation with our law enforcement partners in Illinois and Ohio, this case resulted in the successful prosecution of these individuals."

This case was investigated by the FBI and the Joint Terrorism Task Force in Chicago, Illinois and Toledo, Ohio, with the assistance of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement; U.S. Customs and Border Protection; the Chicago Police Department; the Illinois State Police; the Ohio Highway Patrol; the Toledo Police Department; and the Lucas and Wood County Sheriff's Departments.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Thomas E. Getz and Justin E. Herdman of the National Security Unit of the U.S. Attorney's Office in Cleveland; as well Assistant U.S. Attorney Gregg N. Sofer of the U.S. Attorney's Office in Austin, Texas (formerly of the Justice Department's Counterterrorism Section); and Trial Attorneys Jerome J. Teresinski and Jolie F. Zimmerman of the Justice Department's Counterterrorism Section. The U.S. Attorney's Office in Chicago also provided assistance in this case.

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