

## **Former Head Of Suriname's Counter-Terrorism Unit Pleads Guilty In Manhattan Federal Court To Attempting To Support Hezbollah, Narcotics Trafficking, And Firearms Offenses**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, August 29, 2014

Preet Bharara, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced that DINO BOUTERSE, who is the son of the President of Suriname and reportedly served previously as the head of Suriname's Counter-Terrorism Unit, pled guilty today in Manhattan federal court in connection with his attempt to provide material support and resources to Hezbollah, a designated terrorist organization, along with narcotics trafficking and firearms offenses. BOUTERSE, who was arrested in Panama on August 29, 2013, and arrived in the United States on August 30, 2013, pled guilty before U.S. District Judge Shira A. Scheindlin.

Manhattan U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara said: "Today, a supporter of terrorism, who was in a position of national power in Suriname and presented himself as an opponent of terrorism, has pled guilty. In addition to conspiring to import cocaine into the United States, Dino Bouterse has acknowledged that he attempted to provide material support to Hezbollah. Now he faces, at a minimum, 15 years in prison."

According to the Indictment, other documents filed in Manhattan federal court, and statements made at today's guilty plea:

In 2013, BOUTERSE used his position to assist individuals he believed were members of Hezbollah who intended to conduct terrorist attacks against American interests. In exchange for a multimillion-dollar pay-off, BOUTERSE agreed to allow large numbers of purported Hezbollah operatives to use Suriname as a permanent base for, among other things, attacks on American targets. In furtherance of his efforts to assist Hezbollah, BOUTERSE supplied a false Surinamese passport to a purported Hezbollah operative, who in actuality was an undercover law enforcement officer, for the purpose of clandestine travel, including travel to the United States, began determining which heavy weapons he could provide to Hezbollah, and indicated how Hezbollah operatives, supplied with a Surinamese cover story, could enter the United States.

In June 2013, BOUTERSE and his co-defendant, Edmund Quincy Muntslag, met in Suriname with DEA confidential sources (the "CSs"), in a local government office, to discuss importing cocaine into the United States using commercial airline flights. During the meeting, BOUTERSE showed the CSs a rocket launcher and a kilogram of cocaine.

Approximately one month later, BOUTERSE and Muntslag worked to provide transportation and security for cocaine being sent through Suriname to the United States. As a test run, BOUTERSE and Muntslag sent 10 kilograms of cocaine on a commercial flight departing from Suriname. BOUTERSE personally verified the arrangements for the 10-kilogram cocaine shipment in a text message. The cocaine was intercepted by law enforcement officials after it departed Suriname.

In July 2013, BOUTERSE met with one of the CSs to discuss opening Suriname to the CSs' purported Hezbollah associates.

Later that month, BOUTERSE met in Europe with one of the CSs and with two other men who purported to be associated with Hezbollah. During this meeting, BOUTERSE discussed initially hosting 30 to 60 Hezbollah members in Suriname for training and operations. He also indicated that he wanted a Hezbollah cell in Suriname, in part, to act as a personal armed force. BOUTERSE confirmed his understanding that the purported Hezbollah operatives would operate in South America against American targets, and he agreed to supply Surinamese passports to the operatives—and to assist with their applications for visas to travel from South America into the United States. In addition, in response to a request for surface-to-air missiles and rocket-propelled grenades, BOUTERSE stated that he would need “two months” and that he would provide a list of what he could supply. Finally, at the July 2013 meeting in Europe, BOUTERSE agreed to create a false Surinamese passport for one of the purported Hezbollah operatives, so that BOUTERSE and the Hezbollah operative could travel to Suriname to inspect the facilities that BOUTERSE had agreed to prepare for the Hezbollah contingent.

At a subsequent meeting in August 2013, BOUTERSE delivered a Surinamese passport with false identifying information to a purported Hezbollah operative. As had been discussed at the July 2013 meeting in Europe, the purported Hezbollah operative was to use the fraudulent passport to travel to Suriname. BOUTERSE indicated that everything was ready in Suriname for the arrival of the purported Hezbollah members, and that some “toys,” or weapons, would be available for inspection.

Muntslag was arrested on August 29, 2013, in Trinidad and Tobago, and is pending extradition to the United States to face a narcotics importation charge in the Indictment.

\* \* \*

BOUTERSE, 41, pled guilty to one count of attempting to provide material support to Hezbollah, a designated foreign terrorist organization, one count of conspiring to import cocaine into the United States, and one count of carrying a firearm in connection with the conspiracy to

import cocaine. Those charges carry a maximum term in prison of life, and a mandatory minimum term in prison of 15 years.

The charge against the remaining defendant, Edmund Quincy Muntslag, is merely an allegation, and he is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

Mr. Bharara praised the outstanding efforts of the Special Operations Division of the Drug Enforcement Administration (“DEA”). Mr. Bharara also thanked the DEA’s Miami Field Division, Panama City Country Office, Port-of-Spain Country Office, and Bogota Country Office; the Government of the Republic of Panama; and the U.S. Department of Justice’s Office of International Affairs and its National Security Division.

This case is being handled by the Office’s Terrorism and International Narcotics Unit. Assistant United States Attorneys Michael D. Lockard, Adam Fee, Michael Ferrara, and Edward Y. Kim are in charge of the prosecution.

14-250