



Department of Justice

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Eastern District of New York

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AMERICAN AND GUYANESE CITIZENS CONVICTED OF CONSPIRACY TO LAUNCH ATTACK AT JFK AIRPORT

Defendants Plotted to Explode Fuel Tanks at Airport

BROOKLYN, NY – Following a six-week jury trial, Russell Defreitas and Abdul Kadir were convicted today in the Eastern District of New York of conspiring to attack John F. Kennedy International Airport in Queens, New York, by exploding fuel tanks and the fuel pipeline under the airport. The defendants believed their attack would cause extensive damage to the airport and to the New York economy, as well as the loss of numerous lives. Both defendants face sentences of up to life imprisonment. Sentencing has been scheduled for December 15, 2010.

The convictions were announced by Loretta E. Lynch, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York. The case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF) in New York.

The evidence at trial established that Defreitas, a naturalized United States citizen from Guyana, originated the idea to attack JFK Airport and its fuel tanks and pipelines by drawing on his prior experience working at the airport as a cargo handler. Beginning in 2006, Defreitas recruited others to join the plot, including Abdul Kadir and Abdel Nur, during multiple trips to Guyana and Trinidad. Between trips, Defreitas engaged in video surveillance of JFK Airport, and transported the footage back to Guyana to show to his co-conspirators. Nur pleaded guilty before trial to supporting the plot and faces a sentence of up to 15 years. A fourth member of the plot, Kareem Ibrahim, faces trial on the same charges as Defreitas and Kadir.¹

According to the trial evidence, the plot members also attempted to enlist support for the plot from prominent international terrorist groups and leaders, as well as the government of Iran, including Abu Bakr, leader of the Trinidadian militant group Jamaat Al Muslimeen, and Adnan El Shukrijumah, an al-Qaeda leader. In February 2007, Defreitas recruited Kadir to join the plot because Kadir, a former member of the Guyanese parliament, was an engineer and had connections with militant groups in Iran and Venezuela. During cross-examination at trial,

¹ The charges against Ibrahim are only allegations, and Ibrahim is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

Kadir admitted that he regularly passed information to Iranian authorities and believed himself bound to follow *fatwas* from Iranian religious leaders.

Defreitas was arrested in New York on June 2, 2007. Kadir was arrested in Trinidad aboard a plane headed to Venezuela, en route to Iran. Ibrahim and Nur were also arrested in Trinidad. All three were subsequently extradited to the United States.

The specific charges Defreitas and Kadir were convicted of are: Conspiracy to Attack a Public Transportation System, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 2332f; Conspiracy to Destroy a Building by Fire or Explosive, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 844(n); Conspiracy to Attack Aircraft and Aircraft Materials, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 32; Conspiracy to Destroy International Airport Facilities, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 37; and Conspiracy to Attack a Mass Transportation Facility, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1992(a)(10). Defreitas was also convicted of Surveillance of a Mass Transportation Facility, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1992(a)(8).

“The defendants intended to send a message by killing Americans and destroying the New York City economy,” stated United States Attorney Lynch. “Today, the only message is that those who engage in potentially deadly plots against the United States will be stopped and punished.” United States Attorney Lynch extended her grateful appreciation to the FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force in New York for its role in investigating and prosecuting the case, as well as to the Guyanese and Trinidadian law enforcement authorities who assisted with the investigation and apprehension of the defendants.

The government’s case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Marshall L. Miller, Jason A. Jones, Berit W. Berger, and Zainab Ahmad.

The Defendants:

RUSSELL DEFREITAS, also known as “Mohammed”
Age: 67

ABDUL KADIR, also known as “Aubrey Michael Seaforth”
Age: 58

ABDEL NUR, also known as “Compton Eversley”
Age: 60

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