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**FIRST HEROIN KINGPIN EVER EXTRADITED FROM AFGHANISTAN
PLEADS GUILTY TO SMUGGLING HEROIN INTO UNITED STATES**

MICHAEL J. GARCIA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, and JOHN P. GILBRIDE, Special Agent in Charge of the United States Drug Enforcement Administration (the "DEA") in New York, today announced that BAZ MOHAMMAD, the first Afghan heroin kingpin ever extradited from Afghanistan, pleaded guilty this afternoon in Manhattan federal court to conspiracy to import heroin into the United States. President George W. Bush previously designated BAZ MOHAMMAD as a foreign narcotics kingpin under the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act, which authorizes the President of the United States to make such designations when he determines that a foreign narcotics trafficker presents a threat to the national security, foreign policy, or economy of the United States. Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai authorized the extradition of BAZ MOHAMMAD to the United States in October 2005.

According to an indictment previously unsealed in Manhattan federal court, since 1990, BAZ MOHAMMAD led an international heroin-trafficking organization (the "Organization") responsible for manufacturing and distributing millions of dollars worth of heroin in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The Organization then arranged for the heroin to be transported from Afghanistan and Pakistan into the United States, including New York City, hidden inside suitcases, clothing, and containers. Once the heroin arrived in the United States, other members of the Organization received the heroin and distributed the drugs. These co-conspirators then arranged for millions of dollars in heroin proceeds to be laundered back to BAZ MOHAMMAD and other members of the Organization in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

According to the indictment, the Organization was closely aligned with the Taliban in Afghanistan. During the course of the conspiracy, the Organization provided financial support to the Taliban. More specifically, between 1994 and 2000, the

Organization collected heroin proceeds in the United States for the Taliban in Afghanistan. In exchange for financial support, the Taliban provided the Organization protection for its opium crops, heroin laboratories, drug-transportation routes, and members and associates.

According to the indictment, in or about 1990, BAZ MOHAMMAD discussed heroin trafficking with other members of the Organization in his Karachi, Pakistan residence. During the meeting, BAZ MOHAMMAD told his co-conspirators that selling heroin in the United States was a "Jihad" because they were taking the Americans' money and the heroin was killing them.

As discussed above, on June 1, 2005, President Bush designated MOHAMMAD as a foreign narcotics kingpin pursuant to the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act (the "Kingpin Act"), which targets, on a worldwide basis, significant foreign narcotics traffickers, their organizations, and their operatives. BAZ MOHAMMAD and BASHIR NOORZAI, who was arrested by the DEA in April 2005 and is also being prosecuted by the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York on heroin-importation charges, are the only Afghan narcotics traffickers to ever have been sanctioned by the President of the United States under the Kingpin Act.

Mr. GARCIA stated: "Today's guilty plea is a triumph for the international rule of law, the emerging democracy in Afghanistan, and the people of the United States. The U.S. Government will continue to work with its international partners to pursue narco-terrorists, no matter how powerful they may appear."

Mr. GILBRIDE stated: "The arrest, extradition, and guilty plea of BAZ MOHAMMAD are a victory for law enforcement in the United States and Afghanistan. The DEA is vigilant about identifying those at the highest level of drug distribution in order to disrupt and dismantle their drug organizations from furthering the drug trade into the United States. Justice has been served."

Based on his guilty plea today, BAZ MOHAMMAD faces a maximum sentence of life in prison and a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years in prison.

The prosecution of BAZ MOHAMMAD is being handled by the Office's International Narcotics Trafficking Unit. Assistant United States Attorneys BOYD M. JOHNSON III, AMY FINZI, and JOCELYN STRAUBER are in charge of the prosecution.