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MEXICAN COCAINE KINGPIN
SENTENCED TO 38 YEARS IN PRISON

DAVID N. KELLEY, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced today that JORGE MANUEL TORRES TEYER, leader of a cell of a powerful Mexican cocaine cartel, was sentenced late yesterday in Manhattan federal court to 38 years in prison on narcotics importation and firearms charges. Two of TORRES TEYER's subordinates in the cartel, VICTOR MANUEL ADAN CARRASCO, also known as "Jesus Elmer Cobarrubias," and OSCAR MORENO AQUIRRE, were sentenced to prison terms of 22 years and 17 years, respectively.

TORRES TEYER headed a cell of the Juarez Cartel, one of Mexico's most notorious and violent drug trafficking organizations. TORRES TEYER's cell, headquartered in the Mexican state of Quintana Roo and the Central American nation of Belize, employed a virtual army of gunmen and boat crews, assisted by corrupt military and police officials in both countries, to import over 30 tons of cocaine into the United States from June

2000 to October 2001. The drug shipments involved transfers of ton-quantities of cocaine, at pre-arranged coordinates on the high seas, from Colombian seagoing vessels to vessels under TORRES TEYER's control.

After the exchange, TORRES TEYER's vessels proceeded to Calderitas, in the state of Quintana Roo, Mexico, where the cocaine was received by cartel operatives clothed in military uniforms and carrying assault rifles. The cocaine shipments, which ranged between 1.5 tons and 3 tons each, were then transported by land to the United States.

TORRES TEYER was arrested in Belize in October 2001, after Hurricane Iris forced him to order a 1.5-ton cocaine shipment to be secured on land in Belize City. Officers of the Belize Police Department seized the cocaine in an apartment in Belize City, and arrested TORRES TEYER, as well as the two co-defendants, CARRASCO, who said at the sentencing that his true name is "Jesus Elmer Cobarrubias", and MORENO AGUIRRE, who were standing guard over the cocaine while the hurricane passed.

TORRES TEYER, CARRASCO and MORENO AGUIRRE were expelled from Belize to the United States to face these charges in August 2002. In May and June of 2003, the defendants pled guilty to all charges against them.

In sentencing TORRES TEYER, U.S. District Judge GERARD E. LYNCH told the defendant that while he had sentenced narcotics

defendants to lengthy prison terms in the past, "none of the defendants I have sentenced to these long prison terms comes close to you in terms of the size and scope of the conspiracies in which they have participated, the quantities of drugs they have dealt in, or their significance to the international narcotics trade." In a written opinion, Judge LYNCH noted that TORRES TEYER's criminal conduct went "well beyond the shipment of drugs," and included the possession of "a veritable arsenal of weapons," and the provision of "chilling instructions" to his crews regarding the use of violence in connection with the cocaine importation conspiracy.

Judge LYNCH also found TORRES TEYER responsible for engaging in an effort to obstruct justice, by attempting to bribe a Belizean judge to secure his release from a Belizean prison prior to his expulsion to the U.S.

The successful prosecution of TORRES TEYER and his co-conspirators is the result of a joint Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force ("OCDETF") investigation, led by the United States Attorney's Office, and the United States Drug Enforcement Administration's ("DEA") New York Field Division, Mexico City Country Office and Belize Country Office. Assistance was also provided by the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement ("BICE"), the Belize Police Department, the Belize Director of Public Prosecutions, and the Mexican Attorney General's Office Organized Crime Unit (identified by the Spanish

acronym, "SIEDO").

Mr. KELLEY praised the outstanding investigative efforts of the DEA and BICE, and thanked the Belizean and Mexican governments for their invaluable assistance in the prosecutions.

Assistant United States Attorneys RICHARD SULLIVAN and ANIRUDH BANSAL were in charge of the prosecution.

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