

April 3rd, 2007

Former Palestinian Authority Intelligence Officer Pleads Guilty

MEMPHIS, TN - David Kustoff, United States Attorney for the Western District of Tennessee announced today that Bassam Darwishahmad pleaded guilty today to one count of 18 USC 1546, false statements on an immigration document. Darwishahmad, a former Palestinian Authority intelligence officer, answered "No" to a question on an I 485 (petition for permanent resident alien status) which asked "Have you ever engaged in, conspired to engage in, or do you intend to engage in, or have you ever solicited membership or funds for, or have you through any other means ever assisted or provided funds for, or have you through any other means ever assisted or provided any type of material support to any person or organization that has ever engaged in or conspired to engage in sabotage, kidnapping, political assassination, hijacking or any other form of terrorist activity?" Darwishahmad has admitted to members of the Memphis FBI/JTTF that in 1990 he was recruited by members of Fattah, part of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), to bomb an Israeli police station in Nablus, West Bank. Darwishahmad also admitted to JTTF agents that he had, at that time, thrown a bomb at an Israeli bus containing civilians. Darwishahmad had also admitted to a coworker that he had thrown Molotov Cocktails at Israeli soldiers.

Pursuant to the plea agreement, count one of the indictment, which charged that he had lied on the same I 485 by not disclosing his affiliation with Fattah and the PLO, and the fact that he had had been a Palestinian Authority military intelligence officer for approximately five years, will be dismissed. Likewise, Count three of the indictment, which alleged that he made a false statement to a Immigration and Naturalization officer (now Citizenship and Immigration Services) by lying about the nature of his Israeli conviction relating to the above described events will also be dismissed.

The preparation of a presentence report was waived under the terms of the plea agreement and the court sentenced the defendant, who has been detained since his arrest, to a time served sentence followed by three years of supervised release. Special conditions of his supervised release are that he cooperate with his deportation from the United States and that he not be present in the U.S. during the time of his supervised release. Darwishahmad, who was required by the plea agreement to stay in custody until removed, signed a stipulated order of removal after his sentencing.

This case was Investigated by a Memphis FBI/JTTF Task Force Officer from the Memphis Police Department, assigned full time to the JTTF, by a Immigration and Customs Enforcement agent assigned to the JTTF and a Citizenship and Immigration Services District Adjudication Officer.

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