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## **FOUR INDIVIDUALS CHARGED IN PLOT TO BOMB JOHN F. KENNEDY INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT**

### ***Plot Targets Airport's Jet Fuel Supply Tanks and Pipeline***

### ***Defendants Include Extremists in United States, Guyana, and Trinidad***

BROOKLYN, NY – Four individuals, including a former member of the parliament of Guyana and a former airport cargo worker at New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport (JFK), have been charged with conspiring to attack JFK airport by planting explosives to blow up the airport's major jet-fuel supply tanks and pipeline. The plot was foiled well before it came to fruition through an outstanding law enforcement effort in the United States and abroad.

The arrests were announced today by **Roslynn R. Mauskopf**, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, **Mark J. Mershon**, Assistant Director-in-Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation, New York Field Office, **Raymond W. Kelly**, Commissioner, New York City Police Department, **Samuel J. Plumeri**, Superintendent of Police/Director of Public Safety, Port Authority of New York and New Jersey Police Department, and **Michael Balboni**, Deputy Secretary for Public Safety, New York State Department of Homeland Security.

Agents from the FBI Joint Terrorist Task Force (JTTF) arrested one of the defendants, former JFK employee RUSSELL DEFREITAS, a U.S. citizen and native of Guyana, in Brooklyn, New York. He is expected to make his initial appearance at 2:00 p.m. today before United States Magistrate Judge Kiyoo A. Matsumoto at the U.S. Courthouse, 225 Cadman Plaza East, Brooklyn, New York. ABDUL KADIR, a citizen of Guyana who has served as a member of the Guyanese Parliament, and KAREEM IBRAHIM, a citizen of Trinidad, are in custody in Trinidad. A fourth defendant, ABDEL NUR, is a citizen of Guyana. The United States plans to seek their extradition.

According to the criminal complaint, beginning in January 2006 and continuing to the present, the defendants conspired to destroy buildings, fuel tanks, and fuel pipelines at JFK airport with explosives. JFK handles on average over 1,000 flights daily, approximately half of

which are international flights, and handles annually, approximately 45 million passengers and over 1.5 million tons of cargo with an estimated value of \$120 billion. The fuel supply for these operations are linked primarily to the Buckeye Pipeline, which distributes fuel and other petroleum products to various sites in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Staten Island, Brooklyn, and Queens, New York, among others.

As alleged in the complaint, the plot tapped into an international network of Muslim extremists from the United States, Guyana, and Trinidad, and utilized the knowledge, expertise, and contacts of the conspirators to develop and plan the plot, and obtain operational support and capability to carry it out. For example, as part of the plot, the conspirators dispatched DEFREITAS from Guyana to conduct video and photo surveillance of JFK airport on four occasions in January 2007. During the surveillance and using his knowledge of airport operations from his prior employment, DEFREITAS identified targets and escape routes and assessed airport security. The defendants also obtained satellite photographs of JFK airport and its facilities from the internet and traveled frequently between the United States, Guyana, and Trinidad to discuss their plans and solicit the financial and technical assistance of others.

The defendants used their connections to present their terrorist plot to radical groups in South America and the Caribbean, including senior leadership of Jamaat Al Muslimeen (“JAM”), which was responsible for a deadly coup attempt in Trinidad in 1990. As the complaint alleges, defendants KADIR and NUR were longtime associates of JAM leaders. Defendant KAREEM also was preparing to send an emissary overseas to present the plan to other extremists.

An informant working with law enforcement agents began monitoring the plot at its early stages and made numerous recorded conversations with the defendants. In a recorded conversation following one of the surveillance missions to JFK airport, DEFREITAS predicted that the attacks would result in the destruction of “the whole of Kennedy,” that only a few people would survive the attack, and that because of the location of the targeted fuel pipelines, part of Queens would explode.

In discussing JFK airport as a target, DEFREITAS exulted over JFK airport’s symbolic importance:

Anytime you hit Kennedy, it is the most hurtful thing to the United States. To hit John F. Kennedy, wow .... They love John F. Kennedy like he’s the man .... If you hit that, this whole country will be in mourning. It’s like you can kill the man twice.

In a later recorded conversation with his coconspirators in May 2007, DEFREITAS compared the plot to attack JFK airport to the attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, stating, “even the Twin Towers can’t touch it,” adding that, “this can destroy the economy of America for some time.”

In discussing the plans, KADIR stressed the goal of causing economic damage and suggested minimizing the killing of innocent men and women. In one conversation, KADIR and

DEFREITAS discussed the need to disable the airport control tower from which airport security monitors the fuel tank locations. KADIR, an engineer by training, explained that the tanks were, most likely, double tanks, requiring two explosions to provide enough oxygen to ignite the fuel inside the inner tank.

“The defendants are charged with conspiring to bomb one of the busiest airports in the United States, located in one of the most densely populated areas in the northeast – had the plot been carried out, it could have resulted in unfathomable damage, deaths, and destruction,” stated United States Attorney **Mauskopf**. “But, thanks to the extraordinary efforts of law enforcement, the defendants’ plan never reached the operational stage, and the public was never at risk. We remain unwavering in our commitment to stop terrorist plots before they become terrorist acts and will spare no effort to secure the safety of the public.” Ms. **Mauskopf** added that the investigation is continuing.

**Mark J. Mershon**, Assistant Director-in-Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation, New York Field Office, stated, “The defendants had the connections to present their terrorist plot to radical groups in South America and the Caribbean, including senior leadership of Jamaat Al Muslimeen (“JAM”), which was responsible for a deadly coup attempt in Trinidad in 1990. As the complaint alleges, defendants KADIR and NUR were longtime associates of JAM leaders. Defendant KAREEM was also preparing to send an emissary overseas to present the plan to extremist networks there when law enforcement stepped in to disrupt it.

“Once again, terrorists have plotted against New York, and once more NYPD detectives and FBI agents joined forces to deny them. A disaster has been averted. Congratulations to both in thwarting this plot, and to the Port Authority Police Department with whom the NYPD continues to work closely to protect JFK International Airport,” stated Police Commissioner **Raymond W. Kelly**.

**Kenneth L. Wainstein**, Assistant Attorney General for National Security at the United States Department of Justice, said, “The defendants sought to combine an insider’s knowledge of JFK Airport with the assistance of Islamic radicals in the Caribbean to produce an attack that they boasted would be so devastating to the airport that ‘even the Twin Towers can’t touch it.’ Like the Fort Dix case several weeks ago, this plot highlights the evolving nature of the terrorist threat we face, and our investigation into both plots highlights how our agents and prosecutors are refining their capability to detect and pre-empt such plots before they advance to a dangerous stage.”

“This announcement demonstrates, once again, that there are people continuously plotting violence against our vital assets and our homeland. This investigation and the arrests that are related to it prove that the cooperation of state, local, and federal law enforcement can produce real results that help to make our state and nation safer,” stated **Michael Balboni**, Deputy Secretary for Public Safety, New York State Department of Homeland Security.

If convicted of conspiring to attack JFK airport with explosives, each of the defendants

faces a maximum sentence of life imprisonment. The charges in the complaint are merely allegations, and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Jeffrey Knox and Marshall L. Miller of the Violent Crimes and Terrorism Section.

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