

Indonesian man pleads guilty to conspiracy to provide material support to a foreign terrorist organization, m

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Aided Tamil Tiger Terrorists in the attempted purchase of surface to air missiles, night vision devices, machine guns and state of the art firearms

Erick Wotulo, age 59, a citizen of the Republic of Indonesia, and a retired Indonesian Marine Corps General, pleaded guilty today to conspiracy to provide material support to a designated foreign terrorist organization and money laundering, announced U.S. Attorney for the District of Maryland Rod J. Rosenstein.

U.S. Attorney Rod J. Rosenstein said, "Terrorists must not be permitted to use the United States as a source of funding or equipment. We will continue to utilize all possible means to prevent terrorism, including undercover operations targeting people who attempt to obtain munitions in violation of our laws."

According to the plea agreement, beginning in April 2006 Wotulo conspired with others to export state-of-the-art firearms, machine guns and ammunition, surface to air missiles, night vision goggles and other military weapons to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (Tamil Tigers) operating within Sri Lanka, to be used to fight against Sri Lankan government forces. The conspirators contacted an undercover business located in Maryland about the sale of military weapons. Wotulo aided in the acquisition and proposed delivery of military technology to the Tamil Tigers, requesting price quotes, negotiating the purchases, and providing details of ocean routes for the transfer of the arms to the Tamil Tigers.

Wotulo contacted the undercover business on June 5, 2006 and stated that he and his associates were preparing a purchase order for the weapons. Wotulo stated that the chief of the Tamil Tigers requested that he and another conspirator travel to Baltimore to meet with undercover agents. He affirmed the need to provide the undercover agents with a 25% deposit before the weapons purchase could proceed.

Central to the plan to acquire arms and munitions for the Tamil Tigers was the transfer on Aug. 2, 2006, of \$250,000 into an undercover bank account in Maryland. This transfer was a down payment for the arms and this conduct is reflected in the money laundering charge contained in count three of the superseding indictment.

An additional \$452,000 payment was transferred on Sept. 28, 2006 for the arms. On Sept. 29, 2006 Wotulo arrived in Guam in order to meet with other conspirators and undercover agents to discuss the ship-board loading of the arms and munitions destined for the Tamil Tigers. Wotulo also discussed with undercover agents future sales of weapons to the Tamil Tigers. The arrest of Wotulo and others accused in the conspiracy occurred shortly thereafter in Guam.

Special Agent in Charge William D. Chase, of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Baltimore Field Office, said "Terrorism is our number one priority and the FBI is committed to preventing any terrorist group from using the United States, or any other country, as a source of funding or to procure arms to commit their acts of violence."

"This case demonstrates the real threat posed by international arms trafficking and money laundering. Criminal or terrorist can wire funds anywhere in the world in an effort to further their illegal activity often with no questions asked," said James Dinkins, acting special agent-in-charge of ICE investigations in Baltimore. "ICE's goal is to identify, disrupt and ultimately dismantle organizations that can pose a threat to our national security Daniel F. Willkens, Acting Director of the Defense Criminal Investigative Service, welcomed the guilty plea and stated, "The illegal export of U.S. military technology and weapons is one of the most significant and growing threats to our national security. This investigation highlights the achievement of the Defense Criminal Investigative Service, in cooperation with Federal law enforcement and intelligence agency partners, in countering these threats. DCIS will continue to relentlessly pursue those who steal and illegally export our sensitive technology, to ensure that America's Warfighters maintain their tactical and strategic advantage around the world."

Founded in 1976, the Tamil Tigers has advocated the violent overthrow of the Sri Lankan government, employing acts of violence, including suicide bombings, against both civilian and military targets. Approximately 200 such attacks have been attributed to the Tamil Tigers to date. The Tamil Tigers relies heavily upon supporters throughout the world to raise and launder money, acquire intelligence and purchase military use technology. The U.S. Department of State designated the Tamil Tigers as a Foreign Terrorist Organization in 1997. As such, the Tamil Tigers cannot legally raise money or procure operational equipment in the United States.

Wotulo faces a maximum sentence of 15 years in prison for conspiracy to provide material support and a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison for money laundering.

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