



# Department of Justice

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**THIRD INDIVIDUAL ARRESTED IN CASE INVOLVING BRIBERY, MONEY LAUNDERING, AND CONSPIRACY RELATED TO DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE CONTRACTS IN IRAQ AND KUWAIT**

WASHINGTON – A third individual was arrested and charged with conspiracy to commit money laundering arising from a scheme involving bribery, conspiracy and money laundering related to Department of Defense contracts in Iraq and Kuwait, announced Assistant Attorney General Alice S. Fisher of the Criminal Division and Assistant Attorney General Thomas O. Barnett of the Antitrust Division.

The individual, Carolyn Blake, is the sister of John L. Cockerham, a major in the U.S. Army who was charged on July 22, 2007, with bribery, money laundering and conspiracy arising out of his service as an Army contracting officer in Kuwait in 2004 and 2005. Cockerham's wife, Melissa Cockerham, 40, was charged at the same time for her role in the scheme with conspiracy to defraud the government and conspiracy to commit money laundering. Major Cockerham and his wife were arrested in San Antonio on July 22, 2007, and the charges against the Cockerhams were unsealed on July 23, 2007, in U.S. District Court in San Antonio. Cockerham and his wife are residents of Fort Sam Houston Army Base in San Antonio. The Cockerhams' detention hearing has been set for July 31, 2007, at 10:00 a.m. before Magistrate Judge Mathy.

The complaint against Blake was filed today in U.S. District Court in Dallas. Blake was arrested last night in Dallas. Blake, 44, a resident of Sunnyvale, Texas, and Melissa Cockerham, are charged with conspiracy to defraud the government and conspiracy to commit money laundering. According to the affidavit filed in support of Blake's arrest, beginning in 2005, Major Cockerham began accepting millions of dollars in bribes from contractors who had Department of Defense contracts in Iraq and Kuwait that were managed by Major Cockerham. The affidavit also alleges that under the direction of Major Cockerham, Melissa Cockerham and Carolyn Blake received millions of dollars in U.S. and foreign currency from these contractors and deposited the monies in bank accounts and safe deposit boxes in Kuwait and Dubai. Blake's detention hearing has been set for July 30, 2007, at 2 p.m. in U.S. District Court in Dallas.

All three defendants face up to 20 years in prison and a fine of \$500,000 for the charge of money laundering. The charge of bribery carries a maximum penalty of 15 years in prison and a fine of \$250,000. The conspiracy charge carries a maximum penalty of five years in prison and a fine of \$250,000.

This case is being prosecuted by Trial Attorneys Ann C. Brickley and Richard B. Evans of the Public Integrity Section of the Criminal Division, which is headed by Chief William M. Welch II, and Trial Attorneys Mark W. Pletcher and Emily W. Allen of the National Criminal Enforcement Section of the Antitrust Division, which is headed by Chief Lisa Phelan.

The case is being investigated by special agents of the Army Criminal Investigation Division, Defense Criminal Investigative Service; U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement at the Department of Homeland Security; the Federal Bureau of Investigation; the Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation Division; and the Special Inspector General for Iraqi Reconstruction.

Today's charge is an example of the Department of Justice's commitment to protect U.S. taxpayers from public procurement fraud through its creation of the National Procurement Fraud Task Force. The National Procurement Fraud Initiative announced in October 2006 is designed to promote the early detection, identification, prevention and prosecution of procurement fraud associated with the increase in contracting activity for national security and other government programs.

Anyone with information concerning bid rigging, bribery or other criminal conduct regarding DOD contracts is urged to call the National Criminal Enforcement Section of the Antitrust Division at 202-307-6694, or the Public Integrity Section of the Criminal Division at 202-514-2000

A complaint is only a charge and is not evidence of guilt. A defendant is entitled to a fair trial in which it will be the government's burden to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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