



*United States Attorney
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COCAINE KINGPIN CHARGED IN U.S. APPREHENDED IN HONDURAS

MICHAEL J. GARCIA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, and JOHN P. GILBRIDE, the Special Agent-in-Charge of the New York Office of the United States Drug Enforcement Administration ("DEA"), announced today the apprehension in Honduras of JORGE MARIO PAREDES-CORDOVA ("PAREDES"), designated by the Department of Justice as one of the world's most significant drug kingpins.

PAREDES was charged in the Southern District of New York in 2003 for conspiring to import ton-quantities of cocaine into the United States, and to distribute the cocaine in the New York area and elsewhere. The Indictment charges that a single co-conspirator stored over \$25 million in cocaine proceeds in Guatemala on behalf of PAREDES.

PAREDES has been designated by the Department of Justice to the Consolidated Priority Organization Target ("CPOT") list, a list of the most significant narcotics traffickers in the world. He remained at large until yesterday, when Honduran authorities apprehended PAREDES in Honduras. PAREDES, a Guatemalan national, was presented this afternoon in Miami Federal Court. He was ordered detained pending his removal to New York, where he will be arraigned on the charges in the Indictment before the United States District Judge DEBORAH A. BATTS.

Mr. GARCIA stated, "The defendant is charged with conspiring to cause large quantities of narcotics to be brought into our country and distributed on our streets. Thanks to international law enforcement cooperation, PAREDES-CORDOVA has been apprehended and will be brought to justice in the United States."

"This arrest is representative of international law enforcement's goal of identifying and arresting drug traffickers around the globe," stated Mr. GILBRIDE. "Living on borrowed

time, PAREDES-CORDOVA eluded law enforcement for some time until the consequences of his actions caught up to him."

The investigation of the PAREDES organization has been led by the Office's International Narcotics Trafficking Unit and the DEA's New York Drug Enforcement Task Force (which is comprised of agents and officers of the Drug Enforcement Administration, New York Police Department and the New York State Police), with the assistance of DEA offices in Colombia, Mexico, El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, and with the support of the Department of Justice's Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force ("OCDETF") and Office of International Affairs ("OIA"). Mr. GARCIA praised the outstanding investigative efforts of the NY Drug Enforcement Task Force, and thanked the Department's OCDETF and OIA components for their support.

The charges contained in the Indictment are merely accusations, and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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