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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF NEW MEXICO

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IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF NEW MEXICO

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Plaintiff,

vs.

SABINO ALFONSO MALDONADO,

Defendant.

CRIMINAL NO. 23-CR-1104 KG

PLEA AGREEMENT

Pursuant to Federal Rule of Criminal Procedure 11, the parties hereby notify the Court of the following agreement between the United States Attorney for the District of New Mexico, the defendant, **SABINO ALFONSO MALDONADO**, and the defendant's counsel, **ORLANDO MONDRAGON**:

REPRESENTATION BY COUNSEL

1. The defendant understands the defendant's right to be represented by an attorney and is so represented. The defendant has thoroughly reviewed all aspects of this case with the defendant's attorney and is fully satisfied with that attorney's legal representation.

RIGHTS OF THE DEFENDANT

2. The defendant further understands the following rights:
- a. to plead not guilty;
 - b. to have a trial by jury;
 - c. to confront and cross-examine witnesses and to call witnesses to testify for the defense; and
 - d. against compelled self-incrimination.

WAIVER OF RIGHTS AND PLEA OF GUILTY

3. The defendant hereby agrees to waive these rights and to plead guilty to the Indictment charging in **Count 4** a violation of 18 U.S.C. § 371: Conspiracy to Smuggle Goods from the United States, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 554(a); and in **Count 5** a violation of 18 U.S.C. § 554(a): Smuggling Goods from the United States.

ELEMENTS OF THE OFFENSE

4. If this matter proceeded to trial, the Defendant understands that the United States would be required to prove, beyond a reasonable doubt, the following elements for a violation of 18 U.S.C. § 371: Conspiracy to Smuggle Goods from the United States, as to **Count 4**:

- a. the defendant agreed with at least one other person to violate the law;
- b. one of the conspirators engaged in at least one overt act furthering the conspiracy's objective;
- c. the defendant knew the essential objective of the conspiracy;
- d. the defendant knowingly and voluntarily participated in the conspiracy;
and
- e. there was interdependence among the members of the conspiracy; that is, the members, in some way or manner, intended to act together for their shared mutual benefit within the scope of the conspiracy charged.

5. If this matter proceeded to trial, the Defendant understands that the United States would be required to prove, beyond a reasonable doubt, the following elements for a violation of 18 U.S.C. § 554(a): Smuggling Goods from the United States, as to **Count 5**:

- a. The defendant knowingly exported or sent, or attempted to export or send, any merchandise, article or object, contrary to the any law or regulation of the United States, or received, concealed, bought, sold or in any manner facilitated the transportation, concealment, or sale of such merchandise, article or object, prior to exportation, knowing the same to be intended for exportation contrary to law or regulation;

- b. The exporting or sending of the merchandise, article, or object would be contrary to the laws and regulations of the United States that require a license and permission from the United States Department of State before exporting defense articles; and
- c. The defendant knew the exportation or sending of such merchandise, article, or object was contrary to any law or regulation of the United States.

SENTENCING

6. The defendant understands that the minimum and maximum penalty the Court can impose as to **Count 4** is:

- a. imprisonment for a period of not more than five years;
- b. a fine not to exceed \$250,000.00;
- c. a mandatory term of supervised release not more than three years. (If the defendant serves a term of imprisonment, is then released on supervised release, and violates the conditions of supervised release, the defendant's supervised release could be revoked--even on the last day of the term--and the defendant could then be returned to another period of incarceration and a new term of supervised release); and
- d. a mandatory special penalty assessment of \$100.00.

7. The defendant understands that the minimum and maximum penalty the Court can impose as to **Count 5** is:

- a. imprisonment for a period of not more than ten years;
- b. a fine not to exceed \$250,000.00;
- c. a mandatory term of supervised release not more than three years. (If the defendant serves a term of imprisonment, is then released on supervised release, and violates the conditions of supervised release, the defendant's supervised release could be revoked--even on the last day of the term--and the defendant could then be returned to another period of incarceration and a new term of supervised release); and
- d. a mandatory special penalty assessment of \$100.00.

8. The parties recognize that the Sentencing Guidelines are advisory, and that the Court is required to consider them in determining the sentence it imposes. Defendant further recognizes that while the defendant's attorney may have made a prediction or estimate of the sentence that the Court may impose, the defendant understands that the Court is not bound by any such estimate or prediction.

9. It is expressly understood and agreed by and between the defendant and the United States that:

a. The United States has made, and will make, NO AGREEMENT pursuant to Federal Rule of Criminal Procedure 11(c)(1)(C), that a specific sentence is the appropriate disposition of this case.

b. The United States has made, and will make, NO AGREEMENT to approve, to oppose, or not to oppose pursuant to Federal Rule of Criminal Procedure 11(c)(1)(B), any request made by the defendant or on behalf of the defendant for a particular sentence in this case, other than the recommendations agreed to below.

c. The United States hereby expressly reserves the right to make known to the United States Probation Office and to the Court, for inclusion in the presentence report prepared pursuant to Federal Rule of Criminal Procedure 32, any information that the United States believes may be helpful to the Court, including but not limited to information about any relevant conduct under USSG § 1B1.3.

d. The defendant recognizes that this plea agreement has already conferred a benefit upon the defendant. Consequently, in return for the benefit conferred on the defendant by entering into this agreement, the defendant agrees not to seek a downward departure or variance from the applicable offense level or criminal history category as determined by the Court. This

specifically precludes any claim by the defendant, pursuant to USSG § 4A1.3, that the criminal history category overstates the seriousness of defendant's criminal history. In other words, the defendant agrees that the advisory guideline range as determined by the agreed upon stipulations is reasonable in light of 18 U.S.C. § 3553 and *United States v. Booker*, 543 U.S. 220 (2005).

e. Except under circumstances where the Court, acting on its own, rejects this plea agreement, the defendant agrees that, upon the defendant's signing of this plea agreement, the facts that the defendant has admitted under this plea agreement as set forth below, as well as any facts to which the defendant admits in open court at the defendant's plea hearing, shall be admissible against the defendant under Federal Rule of Evidence 801(d)(2)(A) in any subsequent proceeding, including a criminal trial, and the defendant expressly waives the defendant's rights under Federal Rule of Criminal Procedure 11(f) and Federal Rule of Evidence 410 with regard to the facts the defendant admits in conjunction with this plea agreement. The Court has not acted on its own if its rejection of the plea agreement occurs after Defendant has expressly or implicitly suggested to the Court a desire or willingness to withdraw his or her plea or not to be bound by the terms of this plea agreement.

DEFENDANT'S ADMISSION OF FACTS

10. By my signature on this plea agreement, I am acknowledging that I am pleading guilty because I am, in fact, guilty of the offense(s) to which I am pleading guilty. I recognize and accept responsibility for my criminal conduct. Moreover, in pleading guilty, I acknowledge that if I chose to go to trial instead of entering this plea, the United States could prove facts sufficient to establish my guilt of the offense(s) to which I am pleading guilty beyond a reasonable doubt, including any facts alleged in the Indictment that increase the statutory minimum or maximum

penalties. I specifically admit the following facts related to the charges against me, and declare under penalty of perjury that all of these facts are true and correct:

On March 8, 2023, in Carlsbad, New Mexico, at the direction of a co-conspirator, I picked up a black Jeep from my co-conspirator so that it could be loaded with firearms to be illegally exported to Mexico. Another co-conspirator then picked up the six firearms, wrapped them in towels, and loaded them into the Jeep, hiding them underneath other items in the Jeep. That individual and I then turned over the Jeep to a person who had traveled to Carlsbad from Mexico for the purpose of picking up the firearms and transporting them back to Mexico. As the individual from Mexico began to drive back to Mexico with the firearms, he was stopped by law enforcement officer, and the firearms were seized. The seized firearms are all controlled on the Commerce Control List, and neither I nor my-coconspirators had obtained a license and written authorization to export the firearms. I knew that the attempted exportation of the firearms was in violation of the law, which is the firearms were hidden in the Jeep.

The firearms seized from the vehicle as it was traveling back to Mexico on March 8, 2023, were:

- a. a Pioneer Arms Sport, 7.62x39mm caliber rifle, serial number PAC117511;**
- b. a ROMARM/CUGIR WASR-10, 7.62x39mm rifle, partially obliterated serial number 6576;**
- c. a Citizens Armory USAK, 7.62x39mm rifle, serial number 3083;**
- d. a Ruger AR-556, 5.56mm caliber rifle, serial number 855-66742;**
- e. a CBC 715T, .22 caliber rifle, serial number ELD3383455;**
- f. a Colt M4 Carbine, 5.56 NATO rifle, serial number CR066643;**

11. By signing this agreement, the defendant admits that there is a factual basis for each element of the crime(s) to which the defendant will plead guilty. The defendant agrees that the Court may rely on any of these facts, as well as facts in the presentence report, to determine the defendant's sentence, including, but not limited to, the advisory guideline offense level.

RECOMMENDATIONS

12. Pursuant to Rule 11(c)(1)(B), the United States and the defendant recommend the following:

a. Pursuant to USSG § 3E1.1(a), the defendant has clearly demonstrated a recognition and affirmative acceptance of personal responsibility for the defendant's criminal conduct. Consequently, so long as the defendant continues to accept responsibility for the defendant's criminal conduct, the defendant is entitled to a reduction of two levels from the base offense level as calculated under the sentencing guidelines, and if applicable, of an additional one-level reduction pursuant to USSG § 3E1.1(b). This reduction is contingent upon the defendant providing an appropriate oral or written statement to the United States probation officer who prepares the presentence report in this case in which the defendant clearly establishes the defendant's entitlement to this reduction.

b. Pursuant to USSG § 3B1.2, the defendant was a minor participant in the criminal activity underlying this agreement. Consequently, the defendant is entitled to a reduction of two levels from the base offense level as calculated under the sentencing guidelines.

c. Apart from the provisions in this plea agreement, the United States and the defendant reserve their rights to assert any position or argument with respect to the sentence to be imposed, including but not limited to the applicability of particular sentencing guidelines and adjustments under the guidelines.

13. The defendant understands that the above recommendations are not binding on the Court and that whether the Court accepts these recommendations is a matter solely within the discretion of the Court after it has reviewed the presentence report. Further, the defendant understands that the Court may choose to vary from the advisory guideline sentence. If the Court

does not accept any one or more of the above stipulations and reaches an advisory guideline sentence different than expected by the defendant, or if the Court varies from the advisory guideline range, the defendant will not seek to withdraw the defendant's plea of guilty. In other words, regardless of any recommendations of the parties, the defendant's final sentence is solely within the discretion of the Court.

FORFEITURE

14. The defendant agrees to forfeit, and hereby forfeits, whatever interest the defendant may have in any asset derived from or used in the commission of the offense(s) in this case. The defendant agrees to cooperate fully in helping the United States (a) to locate and identify any such assets and (b) to the extent possible, to obtain possession and/or ownership of all or part of any such assets. The defendant further agrees to cooperate fully in helping the United States locate, identify, and obtain possession and/or ownership of any other assets about which the defendant may have knowledge that were derived from or used in the commission of offenses committed by other persons.

15. The defendant voluntarily and immediately agrees to forfeit to the United States all of the defendant's right, title, and interest in the following assets and properties:

- a. a Pioneer Arms Sport, 7.62x39mm caliber rifle, serial number PAC117511;
- b. a ROMARM/CUGIR WASR-10, 7.62x39mm caliber rifle, partially obliterated serial number 6576;
- c. a Citizens Armory USAK, 7.62x39mm caliber rifle, serial number 3083;
- d. a Ruger AR-556, 5.56mm caliber rifle, serial number 855-66742;
- e. a CBC 715T, .22 caliber rifle, serial number ELD3383455;

- f. a Colt M4 Carbine, 5.56 NATO caliber rifle, serial number CR066643;
- g. approximately 120 rounds of assorted .50 caliber ammunition;
- h. approximately 228 rounds of Tulammo 7.62x39mm caliber ammunition;
- i. approximately 14 rounds of Winchester-Western 7mm Remington caliber ammunition;
- j. approximately 47 rounds of Federal .22 caliber ammunition; and
- k. approximately 200 rounds of Federal 9mm Luger caliber ammunition.

16. The defendant agrees to fully assist the United States in the forfeiture of the above-described property and to take whatever steps are necessary to pass clear title to the United States, including but not limited to execution of any documents necessary to transfer the defendant's interest in the above-described property to the United States.

17. The defendant agrees to waive the right to notice of any forfeiture proceeding involving the above-described property.

18. The defendant knowingly and voluntarily waives the right to a jury trial on the forfeiture of the above-described property. The defendant knowingly and voluntarily waives all constitutional, legal, and equitable defenses to the forfeiture of said property in any proceeding. The defendant agrees to waive any jeopardy defense or claim of double jeopardy, whether constitutional or statutory, and agrees to waive any claim or defense under the Eighth Amendment to the United States Constitution, including any claim of excessive fine, to the forfeiture of said property by the United States or any State or its subdivisions.

DEFENDANT'S OBLIGATIONS

19. The defendant understands the defendant's obligation to provide the United States Probation Office with truthful, accurate, and complete information, including, but not limited to

defendant's true identity, citizenship status, and any prior criminal convictions. The defendant hereby represents that the defendant has complied with and will continue to comply with this obligation. The defendant understands that any misrepresentation with respect to the above obligations may be considered a breach of this plea agreement.

20. The defendant and the United States further stipulate that the defendant should be sentenced at the low end of the guideline range.

21. The defendant agrees that he has no exculpatory information regarding the co-defendant in this case.

22. The defendant agrees that any financial records and information provided by the defendant to the Probation Office, before or after sentencing, may be disclosed to the United States Attorney's Office for use in the collection of any unpaid financial obligation.

23. By signing this plea agreement, the defendant waives the right to withdraw the defendant's plea of guilty pursuant to Federal Rule of Criminal Procedure 11(d) unless: (1) the court rejects the plea agreement pursuant to Federal Rule of Criminal Procedure 11(c)(5) or (2) the defendant can show a fair and just reason as those terms are used in Rule 11(d)(2)(B) for requesting the withdrawal. Furthermore, defendant understands that if the court rejects the plea agreement, whether or not defendant withdraws the guilty plea, the United States is relieved of any obligation it had under the agreement and defendant shall be subject to prosecution for any federal, state, or local crime(s) which this agreement otherwise anticipated would be dismissed or not prosecuted.

WAIVER OF APPEAL AND POST-CONVICTION RIGHTS

24. The defendant is aware that 28 U.S.C. § 1291 and 18 U.S.C. § 3742 afford the right to appeal a conviction and the sentence imposed. Acknowledging that, the defendant knowingly waives the right to appeal the defendant's conviction(s) and any sentence, at or under the maximum statutory penalty authorized by law, as well as any order of restitution entered by the Court. The

defendant also waives the right to appeal any sentence imposed below or within the Guideline range upon a revocation of supervised release in this cause number but may nonetheless appeal the determination of the revocation Guideline range. This waiver extends to any challenge to the manner in which the sentence was determined or imposed, including the district court's authority to make findings supporting the sentence. The defendant also waives the right to appeal the denial of any motion filed under 18 U.S.C. § 3582(c)(1)(A) where such denial rests upon the court's determination that a sentence reduction is not warranted under the factors set forth in 18 U.S.C. § 3553(a). In addition, the defendant agrees to waive any collateral attack to the defendant's conviction(s) and any sentence, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 2241, 2255, or any other extraordinary writ, except on the issue of defense counsel's ineffective assistance.

GOVERNMENT'S AGREEMENT

25. Provided that the defendant fulfills the defendant's obligations as set out above, the United States agrees not to bring additional criminal charges against the defendant arising out of the facts forming the basis of the present Indictment.

26. This agreement is limited to the United States Attorney's Office for the District of New Mexico and does not bind any other federal, state, or local agencies or prosecuting authorities.

VOLUNTARY PLEA

27. The defendant agrees and represents that this plea of guilty is freely and voluntarily made and is not the result of force, threats or promises (other than the promises set forth in this plea agreement and any addenda). There have been no representations or promises from anyone as to what sentence the Court will impose.

VIOLATION OF PLEA AGREEMENT

28. The defendant understands and agrees that if the defendant or the defendant's attorney violates any provision of this plea agreement, the United States may declare this plea

agreement null and void, and the defendant will thereafter be subject to prosecution for any criminal violation including, but not limited to, any crime(s) or offense(s) contained in or related to the charges in this case, as well as perjury, false statement, and obstruction of justice, and any other crime committed by the defendant during prosecution of this case.

SPECIAL ASSESSMENT

29. At the time of sentencing, the defendant will tender a money order or certified check payable to the order of the United States District Court, District of New Mexico, 333 Lomas Boulevard, NW, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87102, in the amount of \$200.00 in payment of the special penalty assessment described above.

ENTIRETY OF AGREEMENT

30. This document and any addenda are a complete statement of the agreement in this case and may not be altered unless done so in writing and signed by all parties. The parties agree and stipulate that this agreement will be considered part of the record of defendant's guilty plea hearing as if the entire agreement had been read into the record of the proceeding. This agreement is effective upon signature by the defendant and an Assistant United States Attorney.

AGREED TO AND SIGNED this 7th day of December, 2023.

ALEXANDER M.M. UBALLEZ
United States Attorney

Renee L. Camacho

RENEE L. CAMACHO
Assistant U.S. Attorney
200 N. Church Street
Las Cruces, NM 88001
(575) 522-2304 – Tel.
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This agreement has been read to me in the language I understand, and I have carefully discussed every part of it with my attorney. I understand the terms of this agreement, and I voluntarily agree to those terms. My attorney has advised me of my rights, of the elements of the offense, of possible defenses, of the sentencing factors set forth in 18 U.S.C. § 3553(a), of the relevant sentencing guidelines provisions, and of the consequences of entering into this agreement. No promises or inducements have been given to me other than those contained in this agreement. No one has threatened or forced me in any way to enter into this agreement. Finally, I am satisfied with the representation of my attorney in this matter.



SABINO ALFONSO MALDONADO
Defendant

I am the attorney for SABINO ALFONSO MALDONADO. I have carefully discussed every part of this agreement with my client. Further, I have fully advised my client of his rights, of the elements of the offense, of possible defenses, of the sentencing factors set forth in 18 U.S.C. § 3553(a), of the relevant sentencing guidelines provisions, and of the consequences of entering into this agreement. To my knowledge, my client's decision to enter into this agreement is an informed and voluntary one.



ORLANDO MONDRAGON
Attorney for Defendant