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JUSTICE NEWS

Department of Justice

Office of Public Affairs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Army Sergeant Pleads Guilty to Accepting \$1.4 Million in
Illegal Gratuities Related to Military Dining Contracts in
Kuwait**

A U.S. Army sergeant pleaded guilty today to accepting approximately \$1.4 million in illegal gratuities from private contractors during his deployment to Kuwait in 2002 and 2003, announced Assistant Attorney General Lanny A. Breuer of the Criminal Division and U.S. Attorney Jeffrey B. Lang of the Central District of Illinois.

Ray Scott Chase, 42, pleaded guilty today before U.S. Magistrate Judge John A. Gorman in the Central District of Illinois to a criminal information charging him with accepting illegal gratuities, structuring monetary transactions and making false statements.

According to court documents, Chase was a sergeant first class during his deployment to Kuwait from January 2002 through December 2003. Chase served as the contracting officer's representative and the non-commissioned officer in charge of the military dining facility at U.S. Central Command at Camp Doha, Kuwait. During 2003, Chase also served as the non-commissioned officer in charge for the military dining facility at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait. Chase supervised the food procurement, preparation and service operations at Camp Doha and Camp Arifjan. As a part of his official duties, Chase also coordinated orders for certain blanket purchase agreements the U.S. Army had with various private contractors to provide supplies and services to both of those dining facilities.

During today's court proceeding and according to court documents, Chase admitted that he received approximately \$1.4 million from private contractors for official acts he performed and was going to perform in 2002 through the end of 2003. According to court documents, he was paid by private contractors that included Tamimi Global Company Ltd., LaNouvelle General Trading & Contracting Corp., and another unnamed company.

In addition to accepting the illegal gratuities, Chase admitted that after he returned to the United States in 2004, he structured various financial transactions to avoid currency transaction reporting requirements. Chase also admitted at today's hearing that he made false statements when interviewed by federal authorities in February 2007.

At sentencing, scheduled for Aug. 6, 2010, before U.S. District Judge Joe B. McDade, Chase faces a maximum sentence of five years in prison. Chase has agreed to forfeit assets traceable to the proceeds of his crimes.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Matthew J. Cannon of the Central District of Illinois and Trial Attorney Joseph A. Capone of the Criminal Division's Fraud Section. The case is being investigated by the Army Criminal Investigations Division; the Defense Criminal Investigative Service; the FBI; the Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigations Division; and members of the National Procurement Fraud Task Force and the International Contract Corruption Task Force (ICCTF). The U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Kansas also provided assistance in the case.

The prosecution represents the Department of Justice's commitment to protect U.S. taxpayers from procurement fraud through 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. The ICCTF is a joint law enforcement agency task force that seeks to detect, investigate and dismantle corruption and contract fraud resulting from U.S. Overseas Contingency Operations world wide, including Afghanistan, Iraq and Kuwait.

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