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SOUTHERN DISTRICT *of* CALIFORNIA

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Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

Southern District of California

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, August 10, 2017

Navy Contractor Admits Accepting Funds from Port Engineer Administering Contracts Involving his Company

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NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY – August 9, 2017

SAN DIEGO – Alfonso Liburd, the President and Chief Executive Officer of San Diego-based defense contractor NEVWEST, Inc. ("NevWest"), pleaded guilty today to improperly aiding and abetting Navy Port Engineer, John Nasshan (charged elsewhere), who improperly administered projects in which he (Nasshan) had a financial interest.

According to documents filed in Court, Nasshan had been employed at Southwest Regional Maintenance Center as a Combat Systems Port Engineer since March of 2009. As a Combat Systems Port Engineer, Nasshan drafted technical direction letters, recommended which contractors were qualified for jobs and verified and certified work performed on Navy ships by contractors. to federal law, Nasshan was prohibited from working on projects in which he had a personal financial interest. Despite this prohibition, Nasshan administered projects at the Navy's Southwest Regional Maintenance Center involving work performed by Liburd and NevWest.

Nasshan made decisions and recommendations affecting Navy contracts with NevWest, Inc. even though he made personal loans to Liburd and NevWest, which is a conflict of interest. As detailed in government pleadings, between May 2011 and September 2015, Nasshan had a financial interest in the business affairs of NevWest. In particular, Nasshan loaned Liburd and NevWest more than \$30,000 at the same time that NevWest was engaged in numerous subcontracts with Southwest Regional Maintenance Center. Liburd accepted these loans despite recognizing that Nasshan's job required that he administer NevWest subcontracts.

In order to hide and conceal their illegal activity, Liburd and Nasshan agreed to keep their financial arrangement secret; to deal in cash when exchanging amounts over \$10,000; and to structure the cash they were exchanging by dividing it up into amounts of \$10,000 or less.

Liburd also lied to Defense Criminal Investigative Service agents regarding his relationship with Nasshan. In particular, on November 13, 2015, he falsely told a DCIS agent that he never: (i) received any money from Nasshan, including cash; (ii) paid Nasshan any money; or (iii) obtained any loans from Nasshan.

“As in all phases of the Government contracting process, it is essential that the work performed by contractors be done free of undue influence, bias, or favoritism,” said Acting U.S. Attorney Alana W. Robinson. “Accordingly, government officials and employees are prohibited from working on any and all matters that would affect their personal financial position.”

“The successful prosecution of this case was the direct result of collaborative teamwork between the Naval Criminal Investigative Service, our federal law enforcement partners and the U.S. Attorney’s Office,” said Gunnar Newquist, Special Agent in Charge of the NCIS Southwest Field Office. “Convictions like this should be a warning to those who would attempt to take advantage of the U.S. Navy, for personal gain. We are unified in our efforts to catch criminals who not only defraud the U.S. Navy, but specifically are stealing money from the American taxpayers at the direct loss to our warfighters.”

Chris Hendrickson, Special Agent in Charge of the Defense Criminal Investigative Service’s Western Field Office said: “DCIS and its partner agencies will aggressively investigate Department of Defense personnel who abuse their positions of trust and corruptly advance their own interests. This behavior tarnishes the integrity of the Department’s procurement processes and erodes the public’s faith in government.”

“The FBI seeks truth and justice in our investigations,” commented FBI Special Agent in Charge Eric S. Birnbaum. “Today’s conviction shows that the FBI, along with our investigative partners, will ultimately uncover the truth despite roadblocks created by those who stand to personally benefit from their lies.”

DEFENDANT:**Case Number 17cr2189-JLS**

Alfonso Liburd

Age: 67

Chula Vista, CA

SUMMARY OF CHARGES

Aiding and Abetting a Conflict of Interest – Title 18, U.S.C., Section 208 and 2
Maximum penalty: Five years in prison and \$250,000 fine

AGENCIES

Federal Bureau of Investigation
Defense Criminal Investigative Service

Naval Criminal Investigative Service

Related Case:

DEFENDANT: Case Number 17cr1167

John Nasshan Age: 55 Jamul, CA

SUMMARY OF CHARGES

Conflict of Interest – Title 18, U.S.C., Section 208

Maximum penalty: Five years in prison and \$250,000 fine

AGENCIES

Federal Bureau of Investigation

Defense Criminal Investigative Service

Naval Criminal Investigative Service

Topic(s):

Financial Fraud

Component(s):

USAO - California, Southern

Press Release Number:

CAS17-0810-Liburd

Updated August 10, 2017