



THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
SOUTHERN DISTRICT *of* CALIFORNIA

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Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

Southern District of California

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, October 13, 2020

CEO Charged with Fraud in Connection with Construction of Military and Humanitarian Projects in Africa

Assistant U.S. Attorneys Mark W. Pletcher (619) 546-9714 and Andrew J. Galvin (619) 546-9721

NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY – October 13, 2020

SAN DIEGO – Micheline Pollock was indicted by a federal grand jury for participating in a scheme to defraud the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the U.S. Navy Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC) in connection with construction contracts for military and humanitarian projects across Africa.

According to the 98-count indictment, Pollock was the chief executive officer of Dover Vantage, a U.S. construction firm that specialized in expeditionary projects in Africa. Between 2011 and 2018, Dover Vantage competed for and won construction contracts for various USACE and NAVFAC projects in Africa, including a maternity ward and a school for the deaf in Togo, and a military aircraft hangar in Niger.

These USACE projects were undertaken in support of the United States Africa Command (AFRICOM), one of 10 combatant commands within the U.S. Department of Defense. AFRICOM's mission is to support diplomacy and development with partner governments and militaries, to apply pressure to various violent extremist organizations, to increase security and U.S. influence, and to protect U.S. government personnel and property. To this end, AFRICOM spends billions of dollars in contracts, grants, and other funding for African militaries to increase their capabilities in fighting violent extremists such as Boko Haram, Al-Shabbab and ISIS. AFRICOM also funds humanitarian assistance projects to benefit populations in areas of Africa where violent extremist groups recruit membership

During the tenure of these contracts, Pollock and other individuals at Dover Vantage submitted fraudulent quality control plans with résumés of fictitious employees; fabricated quality control checklists, certifying quality control work that was never performed; fraudulent concrete strength test results; and fraudulent claims for construction that was never performed or that did not adhere to specification. As a result of the fraudulent conduct, many of the structures constructed by Dover Vantage were so poorly constructed that they collapsed, including the aircraft hangar in Niger and a training facility in Senegal. Most of the other structures constructed by Dover Vantage are now unusable. Pollock's conduct has required USACE to reissue contracts, repair damaged buildings, and reduce operating capacity.

This case is the first arising from the Africa Strike Force initiative out of the Southern District of California, developed to combat fraud and corruption as the United States expends resources across Africa.

“To protect the American and coalition warfighter, vigilance does not end at our borders,” said U.S. Attorney Robert Brewer. “Where our military goes, we go, whether to support and defend military construction dollars or those dollars spent to improve the lives of the communities we assist. To combat fraud, waste, and abuse, we’ve toiled in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Asia-Pacific, and now, through our participation in the Africa Strike Force, we turn our substantial attention to Africa. Corrupt fraudsters in Africa beware, the bright light of justice now shines directly on you.” Brewer praised Assistant U.S. Attorneys Mark W. Pletcher and Andrew J. Galvin and agents from Defense Criminal Investigative Service and Department of the Army, Criminal Investigative Command, for their excellent work on this case.

“Those who seek to blatantly defraud the American taxpayer and jeopardize the safety of the American warfighter and then hide behind an elaborate web of lies will be held accountable” said Stanley A. Newell of Defense Criminal Investigative Service, Transnational Operations Field Office. “Even in the most distant points on the globe, DCIS works tirelessly with our investigative partners of the U.S. Army Criminal Investigative Command and the United States Attorney’s Office to ferret out this type of egregious fraud and to protect the integrity of the Department of Defense procurement system.”

Pollock was arrested on September 22, 2020 in Tbilisi, Georgia by Georgian authorities based on a provisional arrest warrant issued at the request of the United States. She is currently in custody in Georgia and awaiting extradition proceedings.

This case is being investigated by the Defense Criminal Investigative Service, European Post of Duty in Germany, and the US Army Criminal Investigation Command, Major Procurement Fraud Unit, European Fraud Resident Agency. Additional investigative assistance was rendered domestically and internationally by the Naval Criminal Investigative Service. Substantial ongoing assistance in prosecuting this case has been provided by the Department of Justice’s Office of International Affairs.

The U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Southern District of California specially acknowledges the assistance provided by our international partners in Georgia, including the Office of the Prosecutor General of Georgia, Georgia Border Police, Isani Police Department, and the Isani Prosecutor’s Office.

DEFENDANT:

Case Number 20-CR-3167-DMS

Micheline Pollock

Age: 50

Dubai, United Arab Emirates

SUMMARY OF CHARGES

Count 1 -- Conspiracy to Defraud the United States – Title 18, U.S.C., Section 371

Counts 2-35 -- Wire Fraud – Title 18, U.S.C., Section 1343

Counts 36-98 -- Aggravated Identity Theft – Title 18, U.S.C., Section 1028A

AGENCY

Department of Defense, Defense Criminal Investigative Service

Department of the Army, Criminal Investigative Command

*The charges and allegations contained in an indictment or complaint are merely accusations, and the defendants are considered innocent unless and until proven guilty.

Topic(s):

Financial Fraud

Component(s):

USAO - California, Southern

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