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PRESS RELEASE

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Nigerian man pleads guilty and is sentenced to 18 months
by Nigerian Court for computer intrusion in the United States

--Victim opened an email attachment from defendant that unbenownst to her contained “spyware”--

Washington, D.C. – Akeem Adejumo, a 22-year-old Nigerian citizen, has pled guilty and was sentenced to 18 months in prison by the Lagos State High Court in Nigeria on April 16, 2008, for committing fraud on a U.S. citizen and employee of the National Aeronautical and Space Administration (NASA), announced U.S. Attorney Jeffrey A. Taylor and NASA Inspector General Robert W. Cobb. Adejumo pled guilty to a two-count information charging
him with obtaining goods by False Pretenses and Forgery.

This investigation was initiated on December 7, 2006, when NASA Headquarters Information Technology Security employees alerted the NASA Office of Inspector General (OIG) that a computer assigned to a Washington, D.C. NASA Headquarters employee had been compromised by an unknown attacker. Further investigation revealed that the employee had clicked on an attachment to an email which, unbeknownst to the victim, contained “spy-ware,” a malicious computer code capable of capturing and sending data from the victim’s computer to the perpetrator. This email was sent from an individual that the employee had been communicating with from an Internet dating site. As a result of the spy-ware being installed, and without the NASA employee’s knowledge, the attacker was able to obtain her personally-identifying information, including bank account numbers, social security number, driver’s license information, residence address, and passwords to various computer accounts, as well as intercept private electronic communications.

Analysis of network traffic logs and the victim’s computer system revealed that the attacker originated from Nigeria and used multiple email addresses to communicate with the victim. Further investigation revealed the presence of two additional victims and other email addresses used by the attacker. Coordination with members of the Nigerian Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC), and the initiation of a successful undercover operation, resulted in the arrest of the perpetrator, Akeem Abejumo, in Nigeria on April 25, 2007.

In announcing Abejumo’s guilty plea and sentence, U.S. Attorney Taylor and Inspector General Cobb thanked and commended the Nigerian Economic and Financial Crime Commission, particularly the Cyber Crime Unit/Advance Fee Fraud Section, for its exemplary cooperation with the United States in the investigation and its success in the prosecution of this cyber-fraud case.

“Cyber-criminals know no boundaries and, despite their technical prowess, are nonetheless common criminals preying on innocent victims,” said Inspector General Cobb.

“The partnership between law enforcement agencies in the United States and Nigeria in the successful prosecution of this case demonstrates that cooperation between countries is vital to combat pernicious cyber-crime predators,” said U.S. Attorney Taylor. “The Nigerian Judge’s sentence in this case – 18 months in prison – sends a strong message to cyber-criminals everywhere that this conduct will not be tolerated,” said Taylor.

U.S. Attorney Taylor and Inspector General Cobb praised the persistence and hard work of the NASA OIG Computer Crimes Division, Goddard Space Flight Center, as well as U.S. Attorney’s Office Legal Assistant Lisa Robinson who assisted in the investigation, and Assistant U.S. Attorneys G. Bradley Weinsheimer and Thomas J. Hibarger, who investigated this matter. They also thanked Assistant U.S. Attorney Margo K. Brodie of the Eastern District of New York, who serves as the Department of Justice’s Legal Advisor for Nigeria and who attended the plea and sentencing proceeding in Lagos, Nigeria, on behalf of the Department of Justice.