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Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales Renews Commitment to Justice Department's Intellectual Property Task Force

Deputy Chief Of Staff Kyle Sampson Appointed Chairman

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales today announced the continuation of the Justice Department's Task Force on Intellectual Property and renewed the Department's commitment to aggressively enforce intellectual property laws. The Attorney General also named Kyle Sampson, Deputy Chief of Staff and Counselor to the Attorney General, as the new Chairman of the Task Force. Federal prosecutor Arif Alikhan was named Vice Chairman and Executive Director.

"The Intellectual Property Task Force is an important component in the Department of Justice's effort to protect the creativity, resourcefulness, and innovation of Americans and to curb the threat that intellectual property crimes pose to the nation's economic security," said Attorney General Gonzales. "The prosecution of intellectual property offenses remains a high priority, and this effort will ensure that the Department of Justice remains committed to the evolving challenges of intellectual property crime in the digital age."

In March 2004, Attorney General John Ashcroft created the Task Force on Intellectual Property to examine the Department's efforts in dealing with the rising problem of intellectual property crime. The Task Force examined all aspects of intellectual property protection including criminal, civil, and antitrust enforcement; legislation; international coordination; and prevention. After an extensive six-month review, the Task Force released a comprehensive report analyzing the Department's successes and recommending significant improvements in the Department's efforts to protect the nation's intellectual resources.

In addition to recommendations regarding civil and antitrust enforcement of intellectual property laws, the Task Force's proposals include:

Expanding the Department's Computer Hacking and Intellectual Property (CHIP) Program by increasing the number of specially-trained federal prosecutors in key United States Attorneys' Offices throughout the country;

Increasing the number of complex, multi-district and international intellectual property enforcement actions to target sophisticated intellectual property thieves and organizations, building on the unprecedented successes achieved by the Criminal Division's Computer Crime and Intellectual Property Section;

Strengthening the Justice Department's ability to bring intellectual property charges in organized crime, illegal importation, and fraud cases;

Deploying Justice Department attorneys to the United States embassies in Hong Kong and Budapest, Hungary to increase international coordination and enforcement;

Increasing cooperation with individuals, businesses, and industries that have been victimized by intellectual property theft; and

Encouraging respect for intellectual property rights through youth education programs.

Prior to his service with Attorney General Gonzales, Kyle Sampson served in the Department as Counselor to Attorney General John Ashcroft and in the White House as Associate Counsel to the President. He also served as Counsel to Senator Orrin G. Hatch on the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Mr. Sampson will lead the efforts of the Task Force and select other Department officials to serve on the Task Force and work to implement the comprehensive recommendations contained in the Report. In addition, Mr. Sampson and the Task Force members will monitor the progress of the Department's efforts and explore additional strategies to combat the rising problem of intellectual property offenses in the digital world.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Arif Alikhan served under Attorney General Ashcroft as the Task Force's Executive Director and Chief Counsel and was instrumental in producing the extensive report published last year. Mr. Alikhan will be leaving his current position as Chief of the Cyber and Intellectual Property Crimes Section at the U.S. Attorney's Office in Los Angeles to work in the Office of the Deputy Attorney General in Washington, D.C. Mr. Alikhan's responsibilities will include overseeing the implementation of the Task Force's recommendations and directing the Department's Computer Hacking and Intellectual Property Program.

"I thank the Attorney General for appointing me to take on this important role for the Department," said Mr. Sampson. "I look forward to implementing the thoughtful and comprehensive recommendations made by the Task Force under

Attorney General Ashcroft and will work diligently with the Department's experts to address this evolving and important enforcement challenge."

The Task Force on Intellectual Property is a component of the Bush Administration's multi-agency "Strategy Targeting Organized Piracy" (STOP) initiative, announced in October 2004. The STOP Initiative is a coordinated effort with the Department of Commerce, Department of Homeland Security, and the Office of the United States Trade Representative to combat global piracy and counterfeiting.

The Justice Department currently has 18 specialized CHIP Units in United States Attorneys' Offices throughout the nation. Together with trial attorneys in the Computer Crime and

Intellectual Property Section in Washington, D.C., these federal prosecutors are dedicated to prosecuting federal cybercrime and intellectual property offenses.

To download a copy of the Report of the Department of Justice's Task Force on Intellectual Property, please visit the Department's website at http://www.usdoj.gov or http://www.cybercrime.gov.

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