



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on October 12, 2011

U.S. Thwarts Alleged Iran-backed Plot to Kill Saudi Ambassador

Breaking news yesterday revealed that U.S. law enforcement officials thwarted a plot to kill Adel A. Al-Jubeir (left), the Saudi ambassador to the United States. Attorney General Eric Holder discussed the story as it went viral. According to the FBI and DEA, the plot, allegedly backed by the Iranian government, was to assassinate Saudi Arabia's ambassador to the United States in a conspiracy involving a secret Iranian military unit and a citizen of the Islamic republic with a U.S. passport.



Holder reported that the plan "was directed and approved by elements of the Iranian government. High-up officials in those agencies, which is an integral part of the Iranian government, were responsible." He added, "In addition to holding these individual conspirators accountable for their alleged role in this plot, the United States is committed to holding Iran accountable for its actions."

Business Week reports:

Manssor Arbabsia, 56, and Gholam Shakuri were charged with conspiracy to use a weapon of mass destruction, in this case C-4 plastic explosives, to murder Ambassador Adel Al-Jubeir and attack Saudi installations in the U.S. in a plan hatched earlier this year. Targets included "foreign government facilities associated with Saudi Arabia and with another country," the U.S. said in a complaint filed in Manhattan federal court.

Additionally, U.S. Intelligence indicates the plotters targeted Israel's embassy in Washington, as well as those of Israel and Saudi Arabia in Argentina.

Arbabsia, who holds dual citizenship in the United States and Iran, has allegedly been conspiring for several months with Shakuri, who is a member of Iran's "Qods Force — an arm of the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps" that conducts "covert operations abroad," according to the U.S. State Department.

Arbabsia reportedly met in Mexico with a confidential informant of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) on several occasions. He told the informant that his cousin was a "big general" in Iran who focused his attention on activities "outside Iran." According to Arbabsia, that cousin asked him to "find someone to carry out the ambassador's assassination."

The informant claims that he and Arbabsia discussed the possibility of killing the Saudi ambassador in a



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restaurant he often frequented. When the informant indicated that anywhere from 100 to 150 people would be injured during the bombing, including “senators who dine there,” Arbabsia replied, “No big deal.”

Arbabsiar arranged to pay the informant \$1.5 million to carry out the ambassador’s assassination.

Arbabsia was arrested at New York’s John F. Kennedy International Airport; however, Shakuri remains at large.

Meanwhile, the informant was arrested on a narcotics offense, but those charges were dropped in exchange for his cooperation on other unrelated drug cases.

Vice President Joe Biden called the plot an “outrageous act” which seeks to violate “the sanctity and safety” of diplomats. Appearing on ABC’s *Good Morning America*, he declared, “The Iranians are going to have to be held accountable.” He affirmed that the possibility of additional sanctions against Iran has not “been taken off the table.”

It didn’t take long for the sanctions. Infowars.com [reports](#):

The Justice Department made the criminal complaint public ahead of a fresh round of sanctions by the U.S. Treasury Department against the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, which is already sanctioned for its role in overseeing Iran’s nuclear program.

President Obama called the assassination plot “a flagrant violation of U.S. and internal law,” and vowed that the United States will “reiterate our commitment to meet our responsibilities to ensure the security of diplomats serving in our country.”

Meanwhile, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton commended the intelligence agencies for their “terrific achievement” in foiling the plan, adding:

We will be consulting with our friends and partners around the world about how we can send a very strong message that this kind of action, which violates international norms, must be ended, and other areas where we can cooperate more closely in order to send a strong message to Iran and further isolate it from the international community will also be considered.

Iran has steadfastly denied the accusations, describing the foiled plot as “evil.” “These attitudes, which are based on the age-old and hostile policies of the American-Zionist axis, are a ridiculous show in line with a scenario that aims to divide and that emanates from enemies of the region,” Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Ramin Mehmanparast charged in comments reported late yesterday by the state-run Press TV news channel.

Likewise, Mohammad Khazaei, Iran’s ambassador to the United Nations, asserted that the allegations are a U.S. ploy to “divert attention from the current economic and social problems at home.”

Meanwhile, the U.S. government has issued a warning to Americans planning to travel abroad. Holder announced that Iran would be held responsible for any terrorist action tied to the plot, but warned Americans that there was a possibility for “anti-U.S. actions” to take effect following the plot’s disruption.

The Saudi government has also responded to the plot revelations. Saudi Arabia’s Prince Turki Al-Faisal declared yesterday:

To devise a plan to assassinate a representative of a country in a third country and to use drug barons and other such characters in order to achieve that aim is beyond description.



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The burden of proof and the amount of evidence on the case is overwhelming and clearly shows official Iranian responsibility for it. This is unacceptable and something that, in the authorities in Iran, somebody will have to pay a price.

A [statement](#) posted on the website of the Saudi embassy in Washington, D.C. on October 11 read:

The Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia would like to express its appreciation to the responsible agencies of the United States government for preventing a criminal act from taking place. The attempted plot is a despicable violation of international norms, standards and conventions and is not in accord with the principles of humanity.

Some analysts wonder just what impact the exposed plot will have on already tense U.S. relations with Iran, as members of Congress very quickly [condemned](#) the Islamic republic over the plot.

Rep. Michael McCaul (R-Texas) contended that if it were in fact proven that the plot was sponsored by the Iranian government, "this would constitute an act of war not only against the Saudis and Israelis but against the United States as well."

Similarly, Rep. Peter King (R-New York) declared, "Iran's assassination of a foreign diplomat in our country would have violated both U.S. and international law, and represented an act of war."

Also echoing these sentiments was Rep. Ted Poe (R-Texas).

On the other hand, several senior Defense Department officials warned that the United States should not use this plot as "a trip wire for military action in Iran." One official stressed, "No one should read into this ... a pretense for any type of military response." Instead, the Pentagon is viewing the plot as a criminal act, which is being handled by the Department of Justice accordingly.

Congressman Ron Paul's [dailypaul.com](#) website [observed](#), however, that the "propaganda machine has already started to spin this one."

The Obama administration has already vowed to "unite the world" against Tehran. Focusing on claims made by the Obama administration that Iran is in violation of international law for its plot to kill the Saudi ambassador, [dailypaul.com](#) observes wryly, "If plotting to kill another country's government officials is the bar for becoming a 'state sponsor of terrorism,' I have another government to add to the list."



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