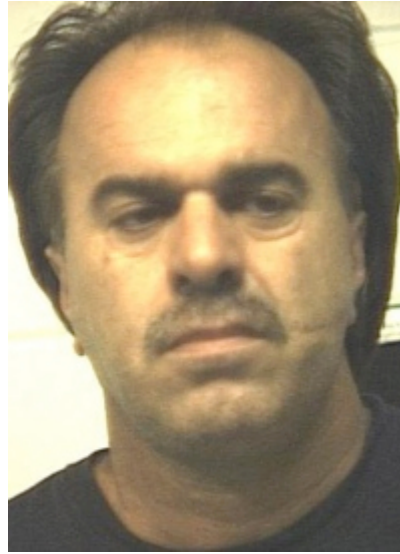




## Is Alleged Iran-backed Assassination Plot Ploy for War?

The alleged Iranian government-sponsored plot to assassinate Saudi Arabia's ambassador to the United States has some analysts pondering how the United States, as well as Israel and Saudi Arabia, will react. Speculation over the nations' responses becomes more convoluted as many skeptics are questioning the legitimacy of the threat, and an increasing number are suggesting that the entire story was a plot to allow the Obama administration to involve America in another foreign war — this time with Iran.



The story began earlier this week, when the Justice Department reported that Mansour (also known as Mansour) Arbabsiar (pictured at left) and Gholam Shakuri conspired to murder Saudi Ambassador Adel Al-Jubeir in Washington, D.C. and attack Saudi installations in the United States. Targets were also said to include Israel's embassy in Washington, as well as those of Israel and Saudi Arabia in Argentina. The Justice Department claims that the Qods Force of the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps was involved in the plot, as well as a member of a Mexican drug cartel, who turned out to be an informant of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). Attorney General Eric Holder declared that the plot was directed and approved by elements of the Iranian government.

Iran has adamantly denied the allegations. Iran's foreign ministry spokesman, Ramin Mehmanparast, stressed, Such worn-out approaches are part of the special scenarios staged and pursued by the enemies of Islam and the region to sow discord among Muslims.

Almost immediately following the breaking news story, however, skepticism at the plot and the notion that it was backed by the Iranian government began to pervade the alternative media.

Some argued that such a plan is uncharacteristic of Iran, particularly of the Qods Force of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard, said to be behind it. According to the *Christian Science Monitor*, the Qods Force has a reputation for careful, methodical work as well as effective use of local proxies, and the notion that it would turn to a Mexican drug lord as well as a used car salesman (Arbabsiar) is far too



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unbelievable.

Antiwar.com declared the entire story to be a hoax, asserting it was another one of US law enforcements manufactured anti-terrorist triumphs, where the feds set somebody up, fabricate a crime out of thin air, and then proceed to solve a case that never really existed to begin with.

Steve Pieczenik, a former State Department official, is one skeptic who [believes](#) that the entire plot was a fabrication intended to generate war. He contends that the United States and Israel will likely use what he describes as the cartoonish terror plot invented by the DEA and the FBI as an opportunity to wage war on Iran.

The uncovering of the alleged plot may prove effective in rallying support for a war against Iran. Those who have subscribed to the belief that Iran was in fact behind the plot have already begun to question whether the United States should respond militarily.

NewsMax.com, for example, [asked](#), Has the time come for the U.S. to launch preemptive military strikes on Irans terrorist infrastructure and nuclear facilities? Constitutionalists, however, point out that there is no constitutional basis for preemptive war.

The writers at NewsMax.com demanded a specific response from the Obama administration to what they perceived to be an increasing threat from Iran:

The time has come for President Obama and each of the Republican presidential candidates to explain what concrete and decisive steps they will take to safeguard U.S. national security from the growing threat posed by the mullahs in Tehran.

Irans monstrous plot to kill Americans, assassinate the Saudi ambassador in our nations capital, and blow up the Saudi and Israeli embassies, was an act of war.

Thus far, the Obama administration asserts that it is resisting calls for war, which White House spokesman Jay Carney claims are coming from the conservative right.

However, it was Vice President Joe Biden who told ABC News that Iran will be held accountable for the plot, and that all options including the use of the military remain on the table.

Reports indicate that both President Obama and King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia have talked about the plot and have agreed that it was a flagrant violation of international law.

Some Saudis are already beginning to openly call for war. Prince Turki al-Faisal, Saudi Arabias former ambassador to Washington and former head of the Saudi intelligence service, declared at a London conference:

The burden of proof and the amount of evidence in the case is overwhelming and clearly shows official Iranian responsibility for this. This is unacceptable. Somebody in Iran will have to pay the price.

Similarly, *Israel National News* [contends](#) that Iran has committed an act of war by formulating this plot, and that the United States should respond in kind.

However, a number of diplomats and foreign affairs analysts have also voiced skepticism over the alleged plot, which may prove to be a deterrent for those interested in responding harshly against Iran. One former western diplomat, said to have an intimate knowledge of Iranian affairs, [told The Guardian](#), I dont believe Irans regime was behind the plot. If we assume it was Irans plot, then it would seem like a group of professional gangsters hiring a careless agent for their most important project. Its



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impossible.

The *Christian Science Monitor* [writes](#):

The alleged plot is enough to justify some form of retaliatory military action by the United States, say some national security experts. Others say the US is likely to limit itself to reinforced diplomatic efforts against Iran while the legal case against two accused plotters makes its way through the American justice system.

At a minimum, this is something that will be used in diplomatic channels to further US efforts to isolate Iran, says Matthew Levitt, director of the intelligence and counterterrorism program at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. I don't know if the administration will want to do much more than that while this remains at the level of allegations.

Meanwhile, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has stated that the United States is currently engaged in discussions with its international allies to determine a proper course of action on how we can send a very strong message that this kind of action, which violates international norms, must be ended."

U.S. officials will reportedly consult with the United Nations Security Council on the matter as well.

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