

**Foiled Iranian Attacks in the U.S. and Latin America: Consequences for Iran  
and the International Community**

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OPERATOR: The following teleconference is the Réalité-EU conference call for Friday, October 14, 2011, beginning at 9 a.m. Central Time.

GERLINDE GERBER: Hello, and welcome. Thank you for joining us today, in today's conversation with Dr. Sami Alfaraj. My name is Gerlinde Gerber. I am a communications associate at Réalité-EU. Réalité-EU is a website and newsletter for journalists, leaders and analysts that focus on developments in and around the Middle East.

Réalité-EU is a nonprofit organization, not connected to any government. I invite you to visit our website at [www.realite-eu.org](http://www.realite-eu.org). We are providing information about Iran, its nuclear program, and peaceful ways to curtail the proliferation of nuclear weapons in the Middle East. Now, it is my pleasure to introduce you to your speaker.

Dr. Sami Alfaraj is the founder and president of the Kuwait Center for Strategic Studies, which he established in 1997 as the first private consulting center on strategic issues in the Gulf region. He serves as an advisor to the GCC and as a consultant to the Kuwaiti government and to parliamentary organizations, private corporations, and government agencies throughout the Gulf region.

Today's briefing with Dr. Sami Alfaraj is on the record. Dr. Alfaraj will give us some opening remarks and then answer your questions. Mr. Alfaraj, the floor is yours.

SAMI ALFARAJ: Thank you very much. Good afternoon, good evening. It's evening here in Kuwait.

What we have seen – the alleged attempt by Iran to assassinate the Saudi ambassador to the United States – is something that we do not really take very lightly. It doesn't mean, at the same time, that we take it too seriously at the moment, until we see further evidence and until we really deliberate the situation as to the responses adequate to face – to respond to what was perpetuated by Iran.

The model of operation is very clear for us. It is always somebody doing something on foreign territory of a certain magnitude, and the Iranian government disclaims the whole thing, charging that its adversaries are basically designing a certain operation in order to justify a certain act – military or diplomatic – against it.

I am a person who has been watching the Iranian situation for a very long time, and for me, what happened in Washington, D.C. is just not outside the norm. The norm, we learned here in the Gulf, was basically set to us in 1996, on the 25th of June of that year, when there was a series of explosions that really wrecked complex 131 in the city of al-Khobar, where American personnel were residing. And many of them were killed in that attack.

If you recall, two other attacks took place four years before that. One was in the Israeli embassy in Buenos Aires. The second was in the Argentine-Israeli Mutual Association, and it resulted also in around 85 victims. In our case, the disclaimer came later, from the Iranian leadership, saying that they were rogue elements in the intelligence service – in spite of the

fact that we really assessed this situation as GCC nations, as Saudi Arabia, and found evidence leading to their – to the action in al-Khobar area.

The same thing, you know – Argentinian judges and investigators found leads, direct leads, to the operations in the embassy and the association in Buenos Aires. In previous – (inaudible) – two nations took – in this case of Argentina, Argentina took legal action. In the case of Saudi Arabia, the situation was very tense in the Gulf, and they considered the whole operation as an internal operation.

And they wanted to deal with it internally, because the cell that took – that took the action against the American personnel on Saudi soil was a Hezbollah cell. And the lead actor was a Saudi national. He was, at the time, on foreign soil, but he was extradited to Saudi Arabia. So the response of Saudi Arabia at that time was measured.

If you recall, the attorney general of the United States wrote an article in 2006 in which he said that the American administration – that is, the Clinton administration at the time – decided not to take the case very seriously, to the point – (inaudible) – military action against Iran. But the evidence was very clear that it was leading to Iran.

In the case of Argentina, the authorities took it to the end and actually exposed not only the lead operator, who was the late Imad Mughniyah of Lebanese descent, but eight Iranian officials, top Iranian officials, including the commercial attaché in the Iranian embassy at the time. The only action that Argentina managed to do at the time was basically to freeze the assets linked to the commercial attaché. It did not reach the others.

The case remained pending, and then the name of the former President of Iran, Mr. Rafsanjani, was removed from the list. It was a similar situation, where top leaders of Iran were charged of having supported terrorism on foreign soil – it happened, actually, in Europe, in Germany, at that time.

And if you compare the three occasions, the three – the three nations – the three types of actions that were taken, they were actions that actually took a high-value target. They resulted in many – in many casualties – and they actually were targeted either to the United States, like in al-Khobar, or to nations allied with the United States, like the case of Israel and also the case of Saudi Arabia.

Because in the first instance, it was – it was an asset of the Israeli government, and that was the embassy. It was an asset belonging to the German government, and that is an ally of the United States. And again, in the case of al-Khobar, it's an asset belonging to the government of Saudi Arabia, because in spite of the fact that the victims were American nations, American military men – air crewmen – but the incident happened, for the first time in the history of Saudi Arabia, by a foreign power on Saudi soil.

We say by a foreign power, because the communication between the Saudi government and the Iranian government resulted in the Iranians admitting their responsibility for their action between them and the Saudis, but saying that the real responsible elements were rogue elements

in Iranian intelligence, which basically, at the time, took many assassination operations against opposition leaders in Iran in those years, the days of the presidency of Mr. Khatami.

The situation now in Washington, D.C. resembles that situation. I don't think that the American administration wants to – wants to speak out about this operation without full knowledge that it has evidence to back it up. However, we in the international – not we, but many in the international community doubt the type of evidence, of the strength of (that ?).

You have many analysts who doubt the operation itself, as it was quite amateurish. But what I would like to stress – that even if the operation is amateurish, it is – it is linked to Iran. That is one thing. We don't know who authorized it yet, but this will become clearer during investigation.

It is already linked to logistics provided by Iran that is stationed around the world. We know that there is logistics for Iran stationed in the Gulf. We know that there is logistics bases for actual terrorism, you know, stationed in Europe. And we know for sure that there are assets of Iran, and logistics stations, in the tri-border area between Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay. So the third element is that logistics belonging to Iran must have been used.

The fourth element that – (audio break) – target not only the Saudi ambassador to the United States but possibly other, you know, high-ranking members of the houses of Congress of the United States.

With regard to the response, now, I think it's a question of how strong the evidence gathered by the United States and presented to the Security Council of the United Nations. The response will be, basically, measured to the strength of the evidence. This is just like in any legal court, any court of law anywhere in the world – that strength of your evidence is the one that will get you the greatest response.

Now, what we expect, and what is circulated in the press, is that the response is not going necessarily to be military. And I don't think, if it's military, it is going to be some type of a general military, because there are – there is opposition to that in the area, because we are already in a state of instability due to the so-called Arab Spring, and especially due to the situation in Syria and Yemen.

Not forgetting that there is havoc being stirred in Bahrain and the eastern province of Saudi Arabia because of Iranian intervention in, you know, in sovereign states. So the case of Bahrain and Saudi Arabia is different than the case in Yemen and Syria. However, in the area – (inaudible) – probably today of Yemen, and perhaps to a limited degree only, the Iranian – (inaudible) – is not found as strong as it is in Syria and in Bahrain.

We have basically – I am a person that – posted an internal memorandum on the 26th of March of this year, in which I expected, or we predicted that the Iranians would find failure in their support for the Assad regime. And this would result in them having this conception, or this perception – perception that would push them to – or at least on their own viewpoint, push them to present themselves once again in Lebanon.

And if they failed, they would come to Iraq and the Gulf. And what we expected in March basically becomes reality today. Iran is fighting for its own – for the survival of its own regime – by stirring, you know, instability in areas quite distant from its own borders, national borders. Iran is aware of this threat to – its instability – because of action happening inside its borders, by its own people, against the regime.

Let's not forget that last week, the Revolutionary Guard of Iran conducted a maneuver that was not targeted against the outside, which is the norm. This time it was targeted against the inside. And the title of the maneuver was how to control demonstrations in the streets in the big Iranian cities. So the Iranian regime is fully aware of what is happening around it, and it has a fear that it is going to be subject to changed conditions, like in Syria.

Now, I'm going to – to just conclude here, and say no matter what we find in the evidence regarded, I mean, collected by the United States in the case of the attempted assassination of the Saudi ambassador in Washington, D.C., what I see is that it's a part of the strategy. The strategy has its own justification. We have predicted that strategy. We have predicted the steps.

The strategy itself is really to carry Iran's war from our backyard – and that is Syria or wherever – for the United States, it is Latin America – to our front door. It carried that to our front door in Bahrain and in Saudi Arabia, and it carried that before – it has carried that before in 1996 in al-Khobar. And today, it carries the same – it applies the same strategy from the backyard to the front door, in the case of the attempted assassination of the Saudi ambassador to the United States. Thank you.

MS. GERBER: Thank you very much. Are there any questions from journalists? I will open the lines now.

OPERATOR: (Gives queuing instructions.) Our first question will come from Matthew Harris.

Q: Yes, I just wondered, in terms of the different strands of the Iranian regime – we're often told there are many different parts of the Iranian government – what this represents, this latest incident, in terms of the power struggle between those different strands.

MR. ALFARAJ: There is an element of power struggle, and there is an element of normal (daily life?), or communications between the two agencies in Iran. I will give you a case in point from two years ago. The cell that was found in Kuwait, discovered in Kuwait, had got very high-value targets – and that is the oil exportation terminals of Kuwait, as well as other strategic locations in Kuwait, including the sites where the coalition forces are.

The other cell – that cell was belonging to the Revolutionary Guard. The other cell belonged to the ministry of intelligence; that was discovered in Bahrain. So there is a division of labor among them, and they sometimes work without the other – not sometimes, most of the time – work without the other branch knowledgeable about what they are doing. So that is a case.

The other thing is that the power struggle has impacted more, perhaps, on this norm of relations between the two agencies. That is to say that because the Revolutionary Guard sides with the – sides with the – are under the direct leadership of the marja (ph), and the Quds Force is part of the Revolutionary Guard assigned to special operations abroad, then we would say that they would not be telling the other branch of intelligence – and that is the ministry of intelligence, which comes directly under the leadership of the president, who really heads the cabinet.

The president, in the past, intervened to really topple one intelligence minister only a few months ago. And that attempt by the president started the power struggle, or brought the power struggle between them to the fore. It was not known to the outside world until that incident between the president and the marja, Mr. Khamenei.

Now, with this today – this incident – it has proven – would it be another example of the intensification of the power struggle inside Iran? My answer to that is yes. Would this go even further, that we would be able to see incidents happening in other areas of the world resulting from Iranian action in supporting such acts without one branch knowing the other? Yes.

And this time, it would be – in my view, would be intentional. It was not a rogue element, as they used to say. The phrase “rogue element” has also been used by the Party of God, Hezbollah, in Lebanon, saying that perhaps some elements were used in certain operations inside Lebanon, but these elements were not directed from the leadership.

Now, if you look, there is always an emphasis by the Iranian leadership, you know, that every operation happening must be authorized by the marja. And if you look even to the actions taken by Hezbollah in Lebanon, these have to be also approved by Iran, because in the hierarchy, the Hezbollah comes under the leadership of the marja, of the Great Ayatollah, Khamenei.

So my conclusion is that such operations, perhaps, reflect the intensification of the struggle between the two. Second, it would not stop here. It would continue. And the more the intensification of the struggle, the more we will see that we will be losing control on the situation, whether Iran basically has done it, or rogue elements, as they call – quote-unquote – have conducted it for Iran.

The more we see the situation also in Syria – the regional situation intensifies – and it becomes clearer that Assad’s grip on power is basically getting shakier, the more we will see operations like that spreading around the world, targeting elements that have already been put on a target list, and with a time frame – with the objective to really carry the battle of Iran from its own borders to the outside. So it’s quite an extensive battle, but on the territories of other nations.

MS. GERBER: Are there any other questions, operator?

OPERATOR: Yes. Our next question comes from Elizabeth Palmer.

Q: Hello. I joined you a little bit late, so forgive me if I’ve – if I’ve covering ground

again that you've covered already. Was this – the main provocation – that there was an attack on American soil, or was it that it was an assassination of a Saudi? In other words, in a list of priorities, the way you see it, were they trying to anger the Saudis or the Americans most? Yes, OK, so let's go with that for a start.

MR. ALFARAJ: I think from a Saudi perspective, the Saudis have come out with a measured response – saying that somebody in Tehran must be held responsible for that. So they look at it as an act against them, first and foremost, against their representative to the United States. Now, this representative happens to have been the adviser to the king before his posting to the United States.

He is today – represents the eyes and ears of the Saudi monarch in the United States, and it is an – a symbol of how the king regards and values his relationship with the United States. He detailed his own adviser to be there as an ambassador.

On every occasion in which the king met a high, senior official of the Obama administration, or the Bush administration before, Mr. Adel al-Jubeir, the ambassador, was present. He comes, he flies all the way to be – to really advise the king of the background of the situation before the said visit. So the Saudi king regards, and the leadership regards the attack as against them.

Now, having been on American soil, and having had the potential of really injuring or maiming or killing other members of high value to the United States – i.e., you know, senators and the like, who would be in the same place, frequent the same place – would basically be considered by the United States as something that requires a reaction, no matter what this reaction or response is.

Today, this is not – I have already explained to your colleague that this represents to us, from a Saudi perspective, or from a GCC perspective, kind of another example – repeated example – another example, I mean, the example of the 25th of June, 1996, when an attack on the Saudi compound in the city of Khobar resulted in the killing and maiming of over 30 air crewmen of the United States.

So here, it is the opposite example. It is a Saudi high target – a high-value target – and the territory of the United States. It's almost the same with, you know, a changing of the positions and the perspectives of the two nations.

At the time, in 1996, the Saudis – again, the Saudis, yesterday in 1996, and today – do not have the stomach for a war in the region. And they managed, at the time, to really control the investigation in order not to make it result in a military attack by the Clinton administration as a reprisal against the killing of American personnel by Iran.

Today, the situation is totally different. The control over the investigation is taking place in the United States. So no matter what we like or dislike here in the region, the United States will act as a sovereign state, as a power, and will respond with the measures it deems fit.

We have a case in point. That is the difference of opinion between the United States and another ally, which is Pakistan, regarding the situation in Waziristan. The Pakistanis object about, you know, pilotless aircraft hitting their Waziristan region, but the United States continues – because as much as there is a difference of opinion between the two, the United States has to carry out its mission in this area.

Here, what the United States would decide as a response to the situation in the region would also be, you know, the decision of the United States. So again, going back to your question, we look at it as an attack on a Saudi high-value target. And it is a target that is related completely and directly to the head of state of Saudi Arabia, to the king himself. And it is kind of an attempt to point to him, that we can reach you anywhere.

That is how the Saudis really read it. And look at their responses and what they said, in two days, by the two brothers – and that is Prince Khalid al-Faisal – and a few days later, one day later – it is the Saudi foreign minister, Prince Saud al-Faisal. They both spoke about an action that is not commensurate with diplomatic practices but commensurate with Iranian actions in the region.

The most important statement that came from the Saudis, which shows that they consider the whole operation as against them, is the statement that says we shall not be cowed by Iran, by such actions. We shall respond and defend ourselves. So here you have it.

MS. GERBER: Any follow up to this?

Q: Yes. Can I speak?

MS. GERBER: Oh, yes.

Q: So if this attack had gone ahead and been successful, what was it that the plotters were hoping to achieve? What sort of reaction were they hoping to provoke, in your view?

MR. ALFARAJ: Well, from our perspective, we have always regarded that the only way for Iran to respond in this area, to defend – from its own point of view, to defend – you know, of course, in quotes – its interest in the area – is that when it is trying to extend its influence and somebody puts a stop to this extension of influence.

Because this extension of influence is at our expense, all of us regional states – it is at the expense of Turkey, of Israel, of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the Gulf states, and Iraq – and so any push by one member would be at the expense of the other. Now, Iran cannot push to the fore, you know, its influence, using conventional military means. So the only asset available to it is nonconventional means, and that is subversion and terrorism – and sleeping cells that we have all over the GCC area and the Middle East area.

And we have seen them in action all over the place. We've seen them in Lebanon. We've seen them perpetrating, you know, actions against Israel and actions against Saudi Arabia, and actions against Kuwait and Bahrain, and so on and so forth.

The number of forces, conventional forces – coalition conventional forces – in the area, actually, decides for Iran that it cannot get itself involved in a major war because it cannot cope with the type of weaponry and personnel available in the area, whether they are in the Gulf, they are in Israel, or they are in Turkey or in Egypt. So the third element is that Iran has always done that in the past on our soil. So there is nothing different in changing the location of the attempted assassination. It is the same for us.

The fourth thing is that it comes in a series of threats that came from Iran. Iran has been using the so-called stick and carrot with regard to our stand on the Syrian – on the Syrian front. So on the Syrian situation, everybody knows that we are not – we are not with the regime of Syria. We are, in the best of cases, standing neutral, and in the worst of cases, we are doing something to help the people inside Iran. Iran takes the worst case, and accuses us of helping the demonstrators in these Syrian cities against the regime of Bashar al-Assad.

We have already received a threat from the Syrian foreign minister – that he could, or Syria could, or Syria and its allies could burn the Gulf ablaze in a few hours – meaning, I don't know, terrorist acts or missiles or whatever, which means a general war in the area.

A fifth element of that is that this situation has been preceded by three actions: one in Bahrain, in which we saw Iranian involvement; one in Saudi Arabia, a few months ago; and one in Saudi Arabia only a couple of weeks ago – less than a couple of weeks ago. So this is, for us, as we look at it, a series of actions, you know, the culmination of which is the declaration that there has been an assassination attempts against the Saudi ambassador – the Saudi ambassador in Washington.

When you look at us as allies – the United States and the GCC, and especially Saudi Arabia – you see that before the Americans went out in public to talk about this attempt, they have consulted with the Saudis, which is the third time that happened in matters related to great national security objectives.

This happened in 1990, when Kuwait was invaded. There was a high delegation coming to convince the Saudi king of, you know, the action that was designed by the United States to respond to Iraqi action at the time. There was a high-level delegation that came to Saudi Arabia prior to 2003, Iraqi Freedom Operation (sic).

And today, we hear about the high delegation that visited Riyadh secretly, and included high-level, senior-level American officials, to explain to the Saudis the level of evidence – or the truth of the evidence gathered by the United States with regard to this operation. So if you look at the two – the two tracks – one track is between allies, and the other track is between us and Iran in the region – you'll see that they are very, basically, very typical for any analyst who really examines the situation.

The situation, for us, is some repetition of all the actions. It is, today, more so than before, because Iran was to take its battle, as I said earlier, from our backyard to our front door. So if you apply that metaphor to the United States, the backyard would be actions perpetrated by

Iran against Israeli targets in Argentina in 1992, twice. And that is the backyard of the United States. Now carrying the whole operation to Washington, D.C.; this is the front.

Q: Thank you.

MS. GERBER: Are there more questions?

OPERATOR: Again, if you would like to ask a question, please press star-one on your telephone keypad now. And our next question comes from Joseph Klein.

Q: Yes, Joseph Klein, Canada Free Press. I also was a little late on the call, so I apologize if you did cover this. But some have expressed skepticism that this plot was orchestrated from the most senior levels of the Iranian regime, because of the clumsy manner in which it was implemented.

And it seemed to depart from the kind of more disciplined, orderly manner that Hezbollah engages in – or other instruments of the Revolutionary, or the Republican Guard (sic). So could you comment on that? I mean, you know, is this an aberration – that it was so – seemed to be clumsily handled, or just got out of control?

MR. ALFARAJ: I think it's the last one you said, because we – a lot of analysts hold the Iranian intelligence in high esteem, which is not the case, actually. Every time they've perpetrated an act of terrorism, they were caught. Or at least, there was enough evidence to point to them, their participation.

If you look at the cells that were discovered in Kuwait in 2010, and prior to that in Bahrain, you see there was a high element of clumsiness because it involved – the clumsiness pertains to the targets. The targets were the oil terminals. Now, nobody in his right mind goes and knocks out of the world consumption 2 million barrels a day by targeting two piers in northern and southern Kuwait.

In the case of Bahrain, no person with his right mind would go and hit the base of the American fleet in Bahrain without the, you know, fingers being pointed at Iran – being so close to the target area itself. So the clumsiness in targeting, clumsiness in the selection of targets – sometimes, selection of high-value targets – has always been clumsy.

With regard to the conduct of the operation, it depends on the group. It depends on the team. Now, what is important for us is that, whether the team is clumsy or whether the team is not clumsy, is that the team draws, you know, support from a base. And the base is very close. The base could be a gang. It could be some safe house. It could be whatever.

A lot of analysts said that this group came only with money, and without weapons. I don't think you would need weapons in the United States. They are on the market. You could buy them and could use them. I think diplomatic pouches can also carry. Other means, other – smuggling through the Mexican-American border is quite feasible.

There is a great base in South America, and that is in the tri-border area between Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay. And we know that this is a base for a very sizable operation, involving drug trafficking – narcotics, I mean – as well as contraband. If we take into consideration that this base can carry a line between that area in South America through West Africa, to the Middle East and Europe, then we know the type of logistics available to conduct criminal operations.

And now the same criminal operations – operation lines are used by the Iranians for their terrorism operations. There are other lines. Also, there is the line – the air route between Tehran, going through Damascus, to Caracas. Here, this is for a different type of operation, and that is to carry things that have been sanctioned, or disapproved by the United Nations Security Council.

When you look at all these lines of logistics, you see that nobody can move and do something, or at least be ready to do something like the operation alleged by the United States authorities until now – and we still have to wait and see the evidence – without having in mind that he could rely on a wealth of logistics and on a capable crew dispersed in that region.

If we look at the al-Quds corps, there are estimates that say that al-Quds corps could not be more than 1,000 personnel. And I am, you know, inclined also to believe that – but 1,000 personnel of a high caliber. But even a person who works in intelligence, who is considered to be a high-caliber member of the agency, or the corps, could really, you know, could really lose control of the operation.

I think the loss of control of this operation, perhaps, is tied to the involvement of a criminal element. Because criminal elements could be basically pursued by the law enforcement agencies, and there could be somebody who could be a mole inside the organization. But I cannot expect a mole inside the Quds Force. I cannot expect, or at least imagine, that somebody would be as, quote-unquote, treacherous to the national security of Iran to do something – you know, could let the operation go berserk, like it had.

No, I believe that perhaps, for the first time, they involved criminal – criminal organizations or criminal elements of non-Middle Eastern origin. And that is Mexican. Because in the past, they have always involved people of Lebanese extraction, and of the Shia doctrine, and they have their loyalty to the supreme leader of Iran – and therefore, their conduct of operations was considered by them as a high sacrifice for the marja, for the supreme leader. And so they worked efficiently.

If you look at the operation in 1992 against the – against the Argentine, the Israeli-Argentine Mutual Association, you will see these were very high – highly, highly professional. I could imagine that if the operation in Washington, D.C. was not really tracked before, it could have resulted in a successful operation.

Let's not forget that this time, the target, which was an area frequented not by the Saudi ambassador, but also by American politicians, must have been under really a great system of control and observance from American law enforcement agencies. And that, perhaps, was the main factor in discovering the operation before it became really active.

MS. GERBER: Do we have more questions?

OPERATOR: Again, if you would like to ask a question, please press star-one on your telephone keypad now. At this time, there are no questions in the queue.

MS. GERBER: OK. Let me ask you two questions that were submitted before by email. It also relates to the topic of Latin America. Iran seems to be trying to expand its influence and operations throughout Latin America. Can you address this issue? And the second question for that is, how worried should Americans be that Iran is using countries on its borders – Mexico and Canada – to infiltrate the U.S.? Is this an isolated incident, or something we can expect more of in the future?

MR. ALFARAJ: Iran, to start with, is not capable – does not have the capabilities, nor is there any other nation that has the capabilities, basically, to hit the United States. Iran also does not want to allow the United States to have freedom of choice – (audio interference, inaudible) – the United States can pick and select targets in Iran, or close to Iran, or in the Middle East, or vital to Iran, without Iran having the capability to respond.

So the idea of – or the strategy of being in the backyard of the United States, or in our backyard, in the case of Syria to the Gulf states, is always in the mind of Iranian strategists. Now, you cannot have a strategy which declares your intentions of carrying the battle into the yard, or into the front door of your adversary, unless you really have the capabilities.

Iran has built those capabilities depending, in the case of Latin America – South America – on the large Middle Eastern community residing in the tri-border area, between Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay. Here, the majority of this Middle Eastern community comes from Lebanese extract (sic). And because of the economic conditions inside of Lebanon, all – well, mostly, the majority – belong to Hezbollah, or their allegiance is to Hezbollah.

These, as I said, were involved – and they are involved – in criminal activities. Not all of them, of course, but some of them are involved. And they are very efficient, to the level that they can run a whole operation from Southern (sic) America to the Middle East, you know, carrying narcotics and contraband both ways.

Money laundering has been, also, one action conducted by Iran through these elements. There were banks – there is a bank – the Canadian, the Lebanese Canadian Bank is in the United Nations list of organizations involved in transportation of narcotics, and money laundering per se. So here, we talk about the nationality, which is Canadian – that's one nationality, Lebanese-Canadian.

In the case of the operation conducted in southern America, Iran relies on the goodwill – not the goodwill, but the alliance between Iran and Venezuela under Mr. Chavez, and Iran and Bolivia, and Iran and Ecuador. And there are also the other, you know, major powers in South America, where Iran has a sizeable presence – major nations like Argentina, Brazil, Mexico.

Here, you see, you have the elements on the ground. You have the financial network. You have the political presence. If we take into consideration that Iran has relied on Venezuela, for instance, for the supply of 20,000 barrels of gasoline per day, to cope with the shortages of gasoline in Iran itself, you see that this is also very important and very touching – very touching on the security of Iran itself in this climate of international sanctions.

But Iran, instead of responding to these nations, who have actually established close relations with Iran on the promise – on Iranian promises that Iran will basically give them funds, will build major projects in them, will finance major development plans – and you will see that all of these promises have evaporated. Iran only built two hospitals – one, I guess, in Bolivia, as I remember, and one in Ecuador. And on the other promises, Iran did not really deliver.

So what is the actual reason for Iran, then, to have relations with these nations, which are considered by the United States to be, kind of, maverick nations, who have elected socialist presidents as leaders – and such leaders who have established relations with an arch-enemy of the United States since 1979? The answer is because Iran wants to be there and to be, kind of, a nagging nuisance for the United States in its backyard.

Now, that is something that the United States has dealt with through the years, has had, actually, different views about the situation. We have two statements – one report coming last year, I think, from the State Department – or the year before – about the increased presence of Iran in Southern (sic) America.

And there is the statement by the commander of the Southern Command, American Southern Command, in South America, which – he said that does not really mean that the Iranians have good enough hierarchy to really conduct successful operations against the United States.

But we see that with the intensification of the war in states by other nations like Colombia, you see that there has to be an element to finance for such wars. This type of finance does not come from Iran – but because Iran is a client for narcotics there, for the spread of narcotics or the allies of Iran, the Middle Eastern allies of Iran in the tri-border area, because they are very active in buying narcotics.

These groups must be making a lot of money to enable one to really conduct more successful operation against established government in South America. Now this is the larger objective that is the instability of the backyard of the United States. This is something we ought not forget so here, if you look at the whole operation you will see that Iran has got great presence in the United – in the – in the backyard of the United States and namely southern – South America because of so many reasons. One reason is to reap back on the United States when the time because ripe, or that is in defense of Iran as they perceive it or in a – in a very proactive model they are alleged to have done recently.

The second one is basically to establish a network of sympathizers with it because Iran feels isolated in its region, in the Middle East. All nations in the Middle East have basically – have alternative interests in really standing up to Iran because Iran aims at extending its

influence at their expense by military and by intelligence means.

The third – so there is the political objective, there is the nonconventional strategy objective, and the third one is basically Iran has got to keep ties with an active community that is helping it in – helping it and really fomenting strife in the Middle East. The money that comes from narcotics or money laundering goes back to Lebanon and finance threats perpetuated by the Hezbollah and Hamas against Israel now and perhaps against others in the future. There was also, (as said ?) for an – as an example that discovered in Egypt two years ago – over a year ago – and there are other elements that are – you know, other Hezbollah is in the Arabian Peninsula and in Iraq.

So the money comes for – the money that comes from such operation, which is a large operation, involved in South America or West Africa and the Middle East and Europe. It's a money-generating operation that is helping Iran to really foment such strife in the Middle East.

When you talk about – the fourth level of that is the level of Iran circumventing the sanctions, and the most obvious example is the relationship between Venezuela and Iran. Iran buys from Venezuelan military industries and there is already a bank in point that has been put on the United Nations list because it is involved in supplying parts to Iran. Iran has already started in – with Mr. Chavez what Mr. Chavez called the nuclear village in 2009 and has visited Tehran. The nuclear village means using uranium expertise to get Iranian technology – nuclear technology to Bolivia – sorry, to Venezuela. This is the most important track and that is the spread of technology related to the – to the nuclear program, nuclear and military programs. And here there is success, there is success in circumventing sanctions and in foiling international action against Iran. So if you look at the four elements of this, you will see that there is really a (watertight ?) strategy that has taken place not only in our region and the Gulf and in the Middle East, but also in Southern America (sic), and it has objectives and the objectives are against the same allies – that's the United States, Israel and the region as well as the Gulf states and Turkey and Egypt.

MS. GERBER: Thank you. Are there any more questions?

MODERATOR: Yes, ma'am, we do have one more question from Linda Karl (ph).

Q: Yes, it seems that Iran has been bending over backwards to provoke the United States to attack it over the last several years. Do they think they're not crossing the red line or are they attempting to bring something such as the return of the Mahdi. (Chuckles.) Thank you.

MR. ALFARAJ: So-called Karbala (ph) 2, the martyrdom of the Imam Hussein (ph) and the thing that is being probably propagated by Mr. Ahmadinejad and the Guard and his folks. However, I don't think – I think we ought to look at the operation and not – and – at least as in the best case scenario, as a warning shot that we are capable of reaching you. This is just like when you have a missile targeted at your own territory, but it's not fired. But you could see that you are in the cross and that it requires only a button to really be fired against you. This is a state of deterrence and probably of mutual assured destructions, Iranian style. They don't have the missiles to reach the United States or the missiles to reach, you know, other targets,

really important targets, like Israel or Turkey in any confrontation with NATO or the Gulf States because you have missile shields all over the place and therefore, they have to really conduct their operations on the nonconventional level.

I see that Iran has spread its mode of nonconventional operation to the front door of the United States now and it is meant at least as a warning, a warning shot. If they meant it as basically that the whole operation goes to the – through fruition, I think they would – they are – you are right to call them, you know, suicidal, that they are – have already crossed the red line.

I am not honestly saying that the United States does not expect such a thing. No, I think as a person in 1987, when I was getting my studies in crisis management in the United States, there was a scenario for our exercise and, funnily enough, I was the leader of the – of the – of this virtual Iranian team. I was the Imam Khomeini at the time, and the scenario started with an explosion in Dulles airport linked completely and directly to Iran. So we had to respond as an Iranian leadership. So knowing your foe was an important element in the United States strategy, and planning ahead was an important element in the United States strategy, but this is not – (inaudible) – this is not a training exercise what we hear today. This is a real thing. This is the thing that I was trained on and my American colleagues and international colleagues in 1987.

We as people perhaps recalled the 1987 exercise and see it happening, you know, before our eyes today. But I still say that – I am quite conservative until I see the real evidence. This is my personal view, and I think I could say that I represent a view here in the GCC that wants to look at the evidence and also to have a measured response because of one important thing: If we take a very – a nonmeasured response, we shall basically achieve for Iran what it aims to do. Iran is – feels isolated, feels that it is weakened, feels that it is losing a track of its strategic objective, feeling that it is basically unable to achieve its strategic objectives, and therefore the element of carrying the battle to the – to the – to their foes', you know, front yard or backyard is an important element to deflect the attention of its own people and of the people of Syria now – Syria being an important ally overlooking the Mediterranean; it's important part – port for Iran to the Mediterranean.

It's been strategic objective throughout Persian history that the element of deflection, the attention of people in Syria, in the Middle East, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, the Gulf, the Middle East, or from the failure of the Syrian regime in coping with the demands of its people, the failure in association – by association of Iran in basically delivering a sound strategy to defend its interest in Syria and in Lebanon and perhaps in Iraq tomorrow weakens the regime. So what is better than, you know, trying to create another war? This we have to take into consideration, but if we play into the Iranian hands, we are going to unite the Iranian nation. There will be no opposition to this regime.

If you take into consideration the statement attributed to the former Iranian president and leader of the – of the change movement, the green movement, one leader was Mr. – (inaudible) – he said today – he was quoted in one Iranian site as having said that – and a warning to Mr. Ahmadinejad, his domestic foe, saying that the United States may use this to attack us, and we have to be ready for that. He said, “we” – together. So we do not want – again, we go to our strategy, our strategy as allies in the Gulf and Turkey and Israel and Egypt and in the United

States and Europe and in South America, we have – we have to not give Iran this opportunity to create, you know, the second Karbala (ph) to deflect the attention – to go into that so-called state of measured martyrdom, to face – to face us wherever, you know, in a military action because this will unite the nation against the regime and this is the last thing we want.

We want the regime to be toppled down from the inside, and it will not be toppled down from the inside except with the will and the actions of the united peoples of Iran. Such action cannot really be mustered without a major failure, and the major failure as I see – and I – as I have predicted since March 26 and our traditional response to 9<sup>th</sup>, in an interview, in a Kuwaiti paper – is taking place. It's taking place gradually with great sacrifices of the Syrian people, but it is taking place. There is a revolution, and it is going to be a minus for Iran and it may topple – it may have an impact on the – on the – how the Iranian people look at the regime and how it conducts Iranian foreign policy, representing them and conducting Iranian foreign policy in the outside world.

MS. GERBER: Thank you. Are there any more questions?

OPERATOR: (Gives queuing instructions.)

At this time, I'm showing no further questions in the queue.

MS. GERBER: I have another question that was submitted earlier, and I'll just read it. Will this – (inaudible) – work to rally the world to increase pressure on the regime regarding its nuclear weapons program? What can be done that would be – that would seriously make the Iranian stop their nuclear program?

MR. ALFARAJ: I believe that we ought to start, at least from our perspective in the Gulf, because it is different than the international perspective – our perspective in the Gulf is that Iranians are not trained enough and they are reckless in the choice of Bushehr to be the trust grate for their so-called peaceful nuclear program.

Bushehr is shaky. Bushehr, there – our reports come from Russian sources. The Russian sources say that the level of the contamination is so high – we had a visit by the Iranian foreign minister to Kuwait only last Monday, and I'm sure he carried a stick and a carrot: The stick is that he is warning us against further action in support of the Syrian demonstrations, if such action is actually taking place there in Syria; and the second is to assure us about what could be done with regard to Bushehr. I believe Bushehr is, you know, is a bomb, an environmental bomb waiting to be – to explode. When you talk about Fukushima, this is a totally different case. This is much graver than Fukushima because in the case of Fukushima, if Fukushima was facing the Pacific Ocean, there were lots of casualties. Here, in this area, will be graver – greater numbers of casualties.

Second thing is that this is the region that helps supply the world – you know, GCC, Iran and Iraq together have got 66 percent of the world's oil supplies; has got, you know, across the Strait of Hormuz goes more than 40 percent, sometimes even further. So when you have an environmental disaster like Fukushima here, in this area, not only do you not have the trained

personnel to face the – to face such a disaster, but also you will have to shut down two things – the two elements of life. One is an element of life to us, and that is water desalination plants because we depend on them for our water resources – daily – daily intake – and the second is an artery of life to the world, and that is the oil terminals and the whole oil industry because they are all next to the Gulf – next to the Gulf waters, so they have to be shut down in order for us to fight the contamination.

Now, the world has to really come back and reexamine Bushehr because Bushehr represents the first step in the so-called peace – nuclear program for peaceful purposes. So if this peaceful Bushehr basically is considered by us and by regional states as junk – as a bomb, as an environmental bomb, the world must really at this time listen to us.

The world must not go back to the 5+1 negotiations over the nuclear material swap, whether in Turkey, Russia, in France, anywhere, with the support of Brazil and Turkey or not – or without that support.

The world must look at the case of impounding the Iranian assets of – you know, enforcing sanctions against the Iranian central bank, considering also how to cut Iranian oil export to the world, as measures that would basically scare the Iranian regime because of its possible or potential threat to its stability in Iran itself. They may sit and reconsider their situation. They may camouflage their responses – (inaudible) – you know, in a formal – in a save – in a face-saving formula because they cannot really back down, considering that they're so openly considering that the morshid (ph), the supreme leader, is an infallible person – he does not make mistakes.

So we have to create – we have to pressure Iran from both sides. One side is the sanction side. The second side is, we have to create a face-saving formula for Iran, and that is opening or inviting Iran or getting us invited to really examine Bushehr and to see its potential threat to the region and to take concerted action as regional states with Iran in order to avert such a disaster in the future.

We are talking about the disaster resulting from a natural phenomenon that is earthquakes, just like Fukushima. We do not speak to the Iranians that we are expecting something happening in Bushehr resulting from human accidents because the Iranians consider themselves to be on top in nuclear technology. And therefore, we have to create both ways of pressure – one is to increase the sanction regime – one to take the whole case to the Security Council.

One – the second is to use it as a point to show the recklessness of the Iranian regime itself, no matter how shaky or how doubtful the success of the operation would be under circumstances, and pass through the Security Council different types of measures of sanctions as I spelled out.

And so from our side in the region we have to really assure Iran that, you know, although we do not want Iran to be intervening in the affairs of the Arab states, whether that is in Iraq, Lebanon, you know, Palestine, or Syria or the Gulf states, we at the same time have no intentions

of carrying any further action into Iranian soil.

Until now we have always said that we believe in the non-intervention and the, you know, sovereignty and territorial integrity of any regional state. And that is to say, in other words, that's what – no matter what happens in Syria, it ends in Syria. And we have no intentions on regional states, and when I say regional states I say the Gulf states, Iraq, Yemen, Egypt, Israel and Turkey. So if Iran fails in Syria we are not going to push Iran further.

And this may assure Iran. So we have to use, once again, the carrot and the stick. The carrot – the stick is the sanctions, the carrot is accommodation. Accommodating, but not at our own expense, no – accommodating Iran in its own international borders.

MS. GERBER: All right, thank you very much. Are there more questions?

OPERATOR: (Gives queuing instructions.) At this time I'm showing no further questions in the queue.

MS. GERBER: All right. Then let me ask one last question. Dr. Alfaraj, you are the adviser to the GCC. Why don't the Gulf nations lobby China and Russia to stop doing so much business with Iran and work increasingly with them instead? Wouldn't that weaken their regime?

MR. ALFARAJ: Yeah, that's true. I mean, but if you look at – the only incentive for Russia is trade. The incentives for China are two – that is oil from the region, and trade. We have had unprecedented visits by the two leaders of China and Russia to the Gulf region a few years back. And those we – that these elements – policy were discussed, you know, extensively. Of course, you have the capability to supply China with oil – and addressing the demands of other nations, at least I speak from the perspective of Saudi Arabia, from the perspective of other nations that have extra capacity like – (inaudible) – United Arab Emirates.

But China also has got another alternatives, and that is Iran is giving it unprecedented access to fuels that have been, you know, left by Japan in enforcement of sanctions on Iran. And China moved in and took their chances in Great Pars area. Iran gave stakes to the Chinese, gave stakes also to the Venezuelans for that stuff. Iran can actually influence the position of China because of oil. But with regard to trade this is the point where we can influence both nations.

The problem with the Chinese is less cumbersome than the Russians. The Chinese, I think, ought to be shown what we can do with regard to trade with them. And the Chinese, as we know, from 1990 onwards will abstain in any vote. The one that goes into details and comes with basically alternative measures in the Security Council is Russia because Russia has got two things working for it. One thing is that it's an oil-producing nation and a gas-producing nation. And the second is that it is not tied to world trade as much as China.

So although Russia would like to have – to establish the free-trade zone with us, it is not in a hurry. And the way it runs its international trade is not just – it's not on the lines China runs its international trade. China wants to produce more and sell more and sell it here in the best,

you know, window for its products in the Gulf. Let's not forget that we have 202 nationalities residing in the Gulf.

So this is a big market for China. It is a big financial market for China to support such expansion of trade with the Gulf. And it is, you know, it's a window for the whole world to come and see what the Chinese are producing. It already has started with Dubai, with the smaller window, and they are expanding to bigger windows that encompass the whole Gulf.

So the pressure points where we can really put our fingers in the case of Russia are weaker. And, again, Russia is the troublesome one. In the case of China, China is – basically we can speak to China and China can take, let's say, a lighter attitude. China's aim always, as well as Russia, is to prevent the establishment of a precedent where an international intervention – whatever that is, economic, military or political – in the affairs of others, fearing that some such – (inaudible) – action may be used against China or against Russia in the future being so big nations and, you know, based on many ethnicities and many sects and many religions.

So because of their fear, it is a fundamental aspect of their national security to stop international intervention so that – (inaudible) – is very expected. However, when you look at the points where we can pressurize both, they are different, as I explained. And in the case of Russia, I think, today one element that we can pressure Russia or induce Russia is to say that we shall be future clients for Russian nuclear technology.

But here in this tight area of the Middle East – and we have so great oil wealth that the health of the world economy depends on. It is actually very, very important for us to think whether we really need to buy Russian technology and nuclear energy or not. It's a serious question for us.

MS. GERBER: All right. Thank you very much. At this point I want to close the call. Thank you oh so much, Dr. Alfaraj, for your very insightful presentation today about Iran and about the uncovered Iranian plot to assassinate the Saudi Arabian ambassador in Washington.

I want to recommend again to visit our website – [www.realite-eu.org](http://www.realite-eu.org) – for background information, analysis and breaking news. On the website we also provide a list of experts that are available for interviews on Iran, security in the Middle East, non-proliferation and human rights.

Thank you very much for participating in this conference call. Have a great day. Bye-bye.

OPERATOR: This concludes our teleconference. You may now disconnect your line.

(END)