



One Hundred Eighteenth Congress
Committee on Homeland Security
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

August 16, 2024

The Honorable Christopher A. Wray
Director
Federal Bureau of Investigation
Washington, D.C. 90535

Dear Director Wray:

The Committee on Homeland Security (Committee) continues to conduct oversight regarding the persistent threats posed by Iran to target U.S. persons, including former and current U.S. government officials on U.S. soil.¹ The arrest and charging of Asif Merchant, a Pakistani national with close ties to Iran, for his connection with a failed plot to assassinate a U.S. government official, including potentially former President Donald Trump, serves as another reminder of the serious threats posed by Iran to American citizens.² We write to request additional information about this foreign-directed plot to kill American citizens and endanger U.S. national security.

On August 6, 2024, the Department of Justice unsealed a 15-page complaint charging Merchant with an alleged murder-for-hire scheme to kill a U.S. government official.³ According to the complaint, Merchant traveled from Pakistan to Istanbul, Turkey, and then to Houston, Texas, to enlist individuals in the United States to execute his assassination scheme.⁴ Merchant's plot to murder a U.S. government official involved various plans, including stealing documents or USB drives from a U.S. government official's residence and planning a protest.⁵ With the assistance of a confidential human source, law enforcement officials foiled the plot by arresting

¹ Letter from Rep. Mark E. Green, Chairman, H. Comm. on Homeland Sec. & Rep. August Pfluger, Chairman, Subcomm. on Counterterrorism, Law Enf't, and Intelligence, H. Comm. on Homeland Sec., to Alejandro Mayorkas, Sec'y of Homeland Sec. et al. (Aug. 31, 2023) (on file with author); *Examining the Current Status of Iran's Axis of Resistance and the Implications for Homeland Security and U.S. Interests: Hearing Before the H. Comm. on Homeland Sec.*, 118th Cong. (Mar. 20, 2024); *An Examination of the Iranian Regime's Threats to Homeland Security: Hearing Before the H. Comm. on Homeland Sec.*, 118th Cong. (Oct. 25, 2023).

² Press Release, U.S. Dep't of Justice, Pakistani National with Ties to Iran Charged in Connection with Foiled Plot to Assassinate a Politician or U.S. Government Official (Aug. 6, 2024), available at <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/pakistani-national-ties-iran-charged-connection-foiled-plot-assassinate-politician-or-us>.

³ Complaint and Affidavit in support of Application for Arrest Warrant, *United States v. Asif Merchant*, 24-mj-00467 (E.D.N.Y. 2024).

⁴ *Id.* at 4.

⁵ *Id.* at 5-6.

Merchant on July 12, before he could leave the United States.⁶ A federal judge has ordered him detained on July 17.⁷

Merchant's foiled plot follows another scheme when an Iranian national and member of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Quds Force orchestrated the attempted assassination of John Bolton, the former U.S. National Security Advisor.⁸ Subsequently, it was revealed that Mike Pompeo, the former Secretary of State, was a second target of the same plot.⁹ Credible threats by Iran have continued to persist against former Secretary Pompeo, as well as his former top aide, Brian Hook, who served as special representative for Iran during the Trump administration.¹⁰ These plots also include Iran's efforts to silence those who publicly criticize the regime's human rights abuses.¹¹

We have serious concerns about the inadequate, and lack of, actions taken by the Biden-Harris administration to impose consequences on the Iranian regime, including efforts to protect our national security and American citizens from foreign threats.

To assist the Committee with its ongoing oversight, please arrange a status update briefing to discuss the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) investigation of Merchant and the FBI's broader work to address threats posed by Iran to U.S. homeland security and its brazen targeting of U.S. persons, including former President Trump and former and current U.S. government officials, as soon as possible, but no later than, 5:00 p.m. on August 30, 2024.

Per Rule X of the U.S House of Representatives, the Committee on Homeland Security is the principal committee of jurisdiction for overall homeland security policy, and has special oversight functions of "all Government activities relating to homeland security, including the interaction of all departments and agencies with the Department of Homeland Security."

Thank you for your prompt attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

⁶ *Id.* at 14.

⁷ Andrew Goudsward and Luc Cohen, *US Charges Man with Alleged Ties to Iran in Foiled Assassination Plot*, REUTERS, Aug. 6, 2024, <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-charges-man-with-alleged-ties-iran-foiled-plot-potentially-targeting-trump-2024-08-06/>.

⁸ Press Release, U.S. Dep't of Justice, Member of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) Charged with Plot to Murder the Former National Security Advisor (Aug. 10, 2022), *available at* <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/member-irans-islamic-revolutionary-guard-corps-irgc-charged-plot-murder-former-national>.

⁹ Brad Dress, Pompeo also Targeted in an Iranian Assassination Plot: Reports, THE HILL, Aug. 11, 2022, <https://thehill.com/policy/international/3596575-pompeo-also-targeted-in-an-iranian-assassination-plot-reports/>.

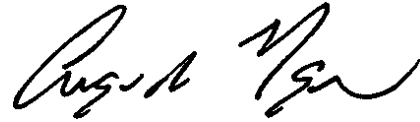
¹⁰ Matthew Lee, *US says Iran Threats to Ex-officials Pompeo, Hook Persist*, ASSOCIATED PRESS, Nov. 14, 2022, <https://apnews.com/article/iran-middle-east-mike-pompeo-congress-government-and-politicscbec8a3658f76ccfe1d0757d962f6689>.

¹¹ *An Examination of the Iranian Regime's Threats to Homeland Security: Hearing Before the H. Comm. on Homeland Sec.*, 118th Cong. (Oct. 25, 2023) (See testimony of Masih Alinejad, Robert Greenway, and Nathan Sales).

Director Wray
August 16, 2024
Page 2



MARK E. GREEN, M.D.
Chairman
Committee on Homeland Security



AUGUST PFLUGER
Chairman
Subcommittee on Counterterrorism,
Law Enforcement, and Intelligence

Encl.

cc: The Honorable Bennie Thompson, Ranking Member
Committee on Homeland Security

The Honorable Seth Magaziner, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Counterterrorism, Law Enforcement, and Intelligence