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## FOREIGN AFFAIRS

## US officials have gathered increasing amount of intel about Iran plotting to assassinate Trump

Iran has for years plotted to get back at Trump for killing top Iranian general Qassem Soleimani in 2020, and the threat is increasing.



CNN previously reported that the U.S. received intelligence about an Iranian plot to assassinate Donald Trump before Thomas Matthew Crooks, 20, tried to kill the former president at his rally in Pennsylvania Saturday. | AP

By ERIN BANCO

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The U.S. intelligence community has received an increasing amount of evidence to suggest that Iran is actively working on plots to kill former President Donald Trump, potentially in the lead up to the election in November.

Two senior U.S. officials familiar with the intelligence said the Biden administration has gathered information from various sources, including human sources, on threats from Tehran that are linked to physical acts of violence — acts that could kill Trump, they said, without providing further details.

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Iran has for years considered a plan to get back at Trump for his killing of top Iranian general Qassem Soleimani in 2020. But the officials said the intelligence has ratcheted up in recent months and officials have become more confident in Tehran's intentions. They also said there may be more attempts on Trump's life in the coming weeks.

Both officials were granted anonymity to speak about sensitive intelligence.

CNN previously reported that the U.S. received intelligence about an Iranian plot to assassinate Trump before Thomas Matthew Crooks, 20, tried to kill the former president at his rally in Pennsylvania Saturday. The two officials stressed to POLITICO that there was no evidence Saturday's shooting had a connection to Iran.

The Office for the Director of National Intelligence declined to comment. The Trump campaign did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

“We have repeatedly and consistently briefed the public and Congress on the existence of these threats. We have repeatedly met at the highest levels of our government to develop and implement a comprehensive response to these threats,” said NSC spokesperson Adrienne Watson. “We have invested extraordinary resources in developing additional information about these threats, disrupting individuals involved in these threats ... and directly warning Iran.”

Iran has traditionally posed threats to U.S. elections, primarily through online misinformation and influence campaigns. U.S. officials have, over the years, warned against Tehran’s attempts to influence American elections and [taken action to punish those responsible](#).

On July 9, Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines made a rare public statement pointing out Iran’s involvement in U.S. protests related to Gaza.

“Iranian government actors have sought to opportunistically take advantage of ongoing protests regarding the war in Gaza, using a playbook we’ve seen other actors use over the years,” Haines said. “We have observed actors tied to Iran’s government posing as activists online, seeking to encourage protests, and even providing financial support to protesters.”

While officials have long tracked Iran’s anger following the Soleimani strike, physical threats of violence emanating from Tehran — those that can be corroborated and verified — are somewhat unusual.

One of the officials said it was clear from the intelligence the U.S. has gathered that Iran is actively plotting — and the administration was working to try and thwart such attacks. Still, Iranian operatives remain a concern for intelligence and national security officials — many of whom are part of organizations, such as Hezbollah, that [have the capability to carry out large-scale attacks on Americans](#).

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