



Department of Justice

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NASHVILLE RESIDENT ARRESTED ON CHARGES OF POSSESSING MACHINE GUNS IN PLAN FOR JIHAD ATTACK

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Attorney General John Ashcroft, Assistant Attorney General Christopher A. Wray of the Criminal Division, U.S. Attorney Jim Vines of the Middle District of Tennessee, Assistant Director Gary Bald of the FBI and Special Agent in Charge James Farnan of the Memphis Division of the FBI announced today that an Iraqi-born Nashville resident who allegedly spoke of “going Jihad” has been arrested on charges of illegally possessing machine guns.

Ahmed Hassan Al-Uqaily, 33, of Nashville, Tennessee, was arrested in Nashville Thursday afternoon after taking possession of two disassembled machine guns and four disassembled hand grenades, along with hundreds of rounds of ammunition, from an undercover agent working with the FBI’s Joint Terrorism Task Force. Al-Uqaily was charged by criminal complaint with unlawfully possessing the machine guns, in violation of 18 U.S.C. 922 (o).

An FBI affidavit in support of the criminal complaint alleges that beginning on or about Aug. 5, 2004, an individual told the FBI’s JTTF of recent conversations with Al-Uqaily, a native-born Iraqi who emigrated to the United States. The individual told the FBI that he had first met Al-Uqaily in 1994 or 1995, and recently ran into him again during a chance meeting in August 2004.

According to the affidavit, Al-Uqaily told the individual during the August meeting that he was angry about the state of affairs in Iraq, that he was “going Jihad” and that he was going to blow up something. The affidavit further alleges that Al-Uqaily approached the individual on Sept. 8, 2004, about obtaining four grenades and two handguns. During conversations over the next few days, the individual allegedly told Al-Uqaily that a weapons dealer could provide him the weapons he sought for \$1,000. Al-Uqaily then allegedly asked whether the weapons dealer had machine guns, and the individual replied that the weapons dealer did.

The affidavit alleges that in conversations the following week, the individual - cooperating with the FBI - asked Al-Uqaily what he needed, and Al-Uqaily replied that he wanted two or three machine guns with clips and bullets, as well as "missiles." In additional conversations on or about Oct. 4, 2004, the individual discussed the price that Al-Uqaily would pay for weapons, and Al-Uqaily then allegedly expressed an interest in a missile designed for use against a tank. Al-Uqaily, responding to an inquiry about where he would go on the mission he spoke of previously, allegedly expressed animosity towards the Jewish community. Discussion ensued about two Jewish facilities in the Nashville area, but Al-Uqaily gave no indication of specific plans in connection with those facilities, according to the affidavit.

Meetings between the individual, Al-Uqaily and an undercover law enforcement agent, posing as the weapons dealer, took place over the following days. In those meetings, Al-Uqaily allegedly expressed interest in seeing what the dealer had in terms of missiles. In a meeting yesterday afternoon at Al-Uqaily's place of employment, Al-Uqaily allegedly paid \$1,000 and took possession of two M-16 machine guns, which were disassembled, a container with the components for four hand grenades, and a bag containing hundreds of rounds of ammunition for the machine guns. Al-Uqaily was then arrested on site.

Al-Uqaily had his initial appearance before Magistrate Judge E. Clifton Knowles this afternoon.

"The philosophy of the Department of the Justice since Sept. 11, 2001, has been crystal clear: We will take every step necessary to protect the innocent civilians of the United States by preventing attacks," said Attorney General John Ashcroft. "This arrest demonstrates our ability to thwart potential threats to our communities before an attack can be carried out."

"This case underscores the significance of information and assistance provided to law enforcement by the good people of the United States," said Assistant Attorney General Christopher A. Wray. "Across the country, law enforcement is vigorously pursuing leads developed from the public in our stepped-up prevention and disruption efforts. The JTTF's outstanding work ensured that this threat to community safety was identified promptly and that effective measures were taken to protect the public."

"This case has displayed the best of cooperative efforts among the various law enforcement agencies of the State, federal and local levels that make up the Middle Tennessee Joint Terrorism Task Force," said U.S. Attorney Jim Vines. "The lead Task Force agent on this case is a Special Agent with the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation. Individual agents from the FBI, Metropolitan Nashville Police Department and the Tennessee Highway Patrol have also played substantial and important roles in the investigation leading up to this arrest."

A criminal charge is merely an allegation. A defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty in a court of law.

The investigation of this matter was conducted by agents of the Joint Terrorism Task Force of the Nashville Resident Office of the FBI. The investigation was assisted by prosecutors from the

U.S. Attorney's Office in the Middle District of Tennessee and the Counterterrorism Section of the Criminal Division at the U.S. Department of Justice.

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