

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA	:	Case: 1:20-mj-00161
v.	:	Assigned To : Harvey, G. Michael
AMIN MAHDAVI, and	:	Assign. Date : 8/17/2020
PARTHIA CARGO LLC	:	Description: Complaint w/ Arrest Warrant
Defendants.	:	
	:	

AFFIDAVIT IN SUPPORT OF APPLICATION FOR ARREST WARRANT

I, Special Agent Christopher M. Earley, being duly sworn, hereby state as follows:

INTRODUCTION

1. I make this affidavit in support of a criminal complaint charging Amin Mahdavi (“MAHDAVI”) and Parthia Cargo LLC (“PARTHIA CARGO”) with knowingly and willfully conspiring to cause a commercial aircraft part that originated in the United States to be shipped to Iran without a U.S. government license, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 371 (conspiracy to defraud the United States), 50 U.S.C. §§ 1701-1706 (the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, or “IEEPA”), and 31 C.F.R. Part 560 (the Iranian Transactions and Sanctions Regulations, or “ITSRs”).

2. I have been a Special Agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (“FBI”) since March 2017. I was employed as a Staff Operations Specialist with the FBI before becoming a Special Agent. I am currently assigned to investigate matters involving export and counter-proliferation offenses, which I also helped investigate during my time as a Staff Operations Specialist. As a result of my training and experience, I am familiar with tactics and methods used by individuals who engage in export and counter-proliferation violations.

3. The facts set forth in this affidavit are based on information that I have obtained from my personal involvement in the investigation and from other law enforcement officers who have been involved in the investigation, on documents I have reviewed, and on my training and experience. Where I have reported statements made by others or from documents that I have reviewed, those statements are reported in substance and in part, unless otherwise indicated. This affidavit is intended to show merely that there is sufficient probable cause for the requested arrest warrant and does not set forth all of my knowledge about this matter.

4. Unless otherwise stated, the facts alleged occurred during the time period of August 29, 2017, through September 2, 2017.

JURISDICTION

5. This Court has jurisdiction to issue the requested arrest warrant because acts or omissions in furtherance of the criminal offense occurred within Washington, D.C. *See* 18 U.S.C. § 3237.

UNITED STATES SANCTIONS ON IRAN

6. IEEPA authorized the President of the United States (the “President”) to impose economic sanctions on a foreign country in response to an unusual or extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, or economy of the United States when the President declared a national emergency with respect to that threat.

7. On March 15, 1995, the President issued Executive Order No. 12957, finding that “the actions and policies of the Government of Iran constitute an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States,” and declaring “a national emergency to deal with that threat.” On May 6, 1995, the President issued Executive Order No. 12959, which imposed comprehensive trade and financial sanctions on Iran. These sanctions

prohibited, among other things, the exportation, re-exportation, sale, or supply, directly or indirectly, to Iran or the Government of Iran, of any goods, technology, or services from the United States or U.S. persons, wherever located. This included persons in a foreign country with knowledge or reason to know that such goods, technology, or services were intended specifically for supply, transshipment, or re-exportation, directly or indirectly, to Iran or the Government of Iran. On August 19, 1997, the President issued Executive Order No. 13059, consolidating and clarifying Executive Order Nos. 12957 and 12959 (collectively, the “Executive Orders”). The most recent continuation of this national emergency was executed on March 12, 2020. 85 Fed. Reg. 14731 (Mar. 13, 2020). Pursuant to this authority, the Secretary of the Treasury promulgated the Iranian Transaction Regulations, 31 C.F.R. Part 560, implementing the sanctions imposed by the Executive Orders. Effective October 22, 2012, the Department of the Treasury renamed and reissued the Iranian Transaction Regulations as the Iranian Transactions and Sanctions Regulations (“ITSRs”).

8. The ITSRs prohibited transactions for the sale of commercial passenger aircraft and related parts and services to Iran absent specific authorization from the United States Department of the Treasury in the form of a license. 31 C.F.R. Part 560.

9. Pursuant to 50 U.S.C. § 1705, it was a crime to willfully violate, attempt to violate, conspire to violate, or cause a violation of any license, order, regulation or prohibition issued under IEEPA.

INDIVIDUALS AND BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS

10. MAHDAVI was an Iranian national who resided in the United Arab Emirates (“U.A.E.”).

11. PARTHIA CARGO was a business organization located in the U.A.E. PARTHIA

CARGO provided freight forwarding services in the U.A.E., meaning that PARTHIA CARGO organized shipments for individuals and business organizations to transfer goods from one location to another. PARTHIA CARGO facilitated shipments of goods to be delivered from the U.A.E. to Iran, including goods manufactured in the United States. MAHDAVI worked as the Managing Director of PARTHIA CARGO.

12. COMPANY 1 was a business organization located outside the United States. COMPANY 1 operated as an aircraft parts supplier, including by purchasing aircraft parts from manufacturers and selling those aircraft parts to buyers. COMPANY 1 purchased aircraft parts from United States manufacturers for the purpose of supplying those parts to individuals and entities located in Iran.

13. PERSON A was an employee of COMPANY 1 who operated as a sales agent focused on supplying aircraft parts to individuals and entities located in Iran, including aircraft parts manufactured in the United States.

14. PERSON B was an employee of COMPANY 1 who handled shipping logistics among other responsibilities. PERSON B facilitated the shipment of aircraft parts manufactured in the United States to individuals and entities located in Iran.

15. COMPANY 2 was a business organization located in Iran that provided air transport services in the form of domestic, international, and charter flights. COMPANY 2 sought to procure aircraft parts manufactured in the United States for its fleet of aircraft. COMPANY 2 purchased United States aircraft parts from COMPANY 1, and utilized the freight forwarding services of PARTHIA CARGO to transfer the goods to Iran.

16. COMPANY 3 was a business organization located in the United States that provided aircraft inventory support for airlines and distributors, including by supplying aircraft parts to

domestic and international customers. COMPANY 3 exported aircraft parts to COMPANY 1, after being assured in writing by PERSON B that COMPANY 1 would not re-export any United States goods to Iran unless authorized by the United States government.

17. The United States Department of the Treasury was a federal government agency located in Washington, D.C. Through its Office of Foreign Assets Control (“OFAC”), also located in Washington, D.C., the United States Department of the Treasury administered and enforced economic and trade sanctions against certain foreign countries, including Iran, as well as individuals and entities associated with those countries. OFAC was empowered to grant or deny license applications for the export or re-export of U.S. goods to Iran.

MAHDAVI’S KNOWLEDGE OF UNITED STATES SANCTIONS ON IRAN

18. MAHDAVI spoke with U.S. government officials on at least three occasions about the U.S. sanctions on Iran, yet he nonetheless subsequently conspired to violate those sanctions.

19. On June 25, 2014, MAHDAVI acknowledged to a U.S. government official that, among other things, MAHDAVI was aware of the U.S. sanctions on Iran, and that PARTHIA CARGO primarily did business with Iran.

20. On April 9, 2017, MAHDAVI told a U.S. government official that, among other things, MAHDAVI urged his customers to have U.S. goods shipped to Europe before the goods were re-exported to Iran. The U.S. government official told MAHDAVI that such a scheme would still require a license from the U.S. government. The U.S. government official clarified to MAHDAVI that a specific license from the U.S. government was required for the export of U.S. commercial aircraft parts to Iran.

21. On July 20, 2017, MAHDAVI told a U.S. government official that, among other things, he understood that a U.S. government license was necessary to lawfully ship U.S. commercial

aircraft parts to Iran, and MAHDAVI said that he would stop shipping such parts to Iran as long as he was aware that the parts had a U.S. connection. MAHDAVI described himself as an Iranian patriot who felt concern for the airline passengers in Iran as the majority of the commercial aircraft there were over 20 years old and needed to be supplied with new parts. MAHDAVI stated that he would tell his employees that he can no longer ship U.S.-origin items to Iran; for purposes of this affidavit, the Court may assume that MAHDAVI did so.

THE CRIMINAL CONSPIRACY

22. Little more than one month after MAHDAVI's July 20, 2017, conversation with a U.S. government official about the U.S. sanctions on Iran, MAHDAVI conspired and agreed with PARTHIA CARGO, COMPANIES 1 and 2, and PERSONS A and B, to knowingly and willfully violate those sanctions by causing a U.S.-origin commercial aircraft part to be shipped from the United States to Iran:

- a. On or around August 29, 2017, agents of COMPANY 2 in Iran sought from agents of COMPANY 1, including PERSON A, a cost and delivery quotation for the purchase of a U.S.-origin commercial aircraft part.
- b. On or around August 29, 2017, PERSON A provided to agents of COMPANY 2 in Iran a quotation for the purchase of the U.S.-origin commercial aircraft part.
- c. Between on or around August 29, 2017, and on or around September 2, 2017, PERSON A with COMPANY 1 spoke by telephone with an agent of COMPANY 2 in Iran, and confirmed that COMPANY 2 would purchase the U.S.-origin commercial aircraft part.
- d. On or around August 30, 2017, COMPANY 1 submitted a purchase order to COMPANY 3 in the United States for the purchase of the U.S.-origin commercial aircraft part.
- e. On or around September 2, 2017, PERSON A with COMPANY 1 informed

an agent of COMPANY 2 in Iran that the U.S.-origin commercial aircraft part had been delivered from the United States to the COMPANY 1 office outside the United States, and that the item would soon ship to the U.A.E.

f. On or around September 2, 2017, an agent of COMPANY 2 in Iran instructed PERSON A with COMPANY 1 to make arrangements with MAHDAVI for the U.S.-origin commercial aircraft part to be shipped to PARTHIA CARGO in the U.A.E.

g. On or around September 2, 2017, MAHDAVI was informed that the commercial aircraft part originated in the United States before it was shipped to COMPANY 1.

h. On or around September 2, 2017, MAHDAVI instructed PERSON A and agents of COMPANY 2 in Iran that PARTHIA CARGO was ready to collect the U.S.-origin commercial aircraft part as a local shipment (as opposed to an international import) in the U.A.E. When MAHDAVI issued this instruction, he was already informed that the commercial aircraft part had originated in the United States.

i. On or around September 2, 2017, PERSON A instructed PERSON B to coordinate shipment arrangements with an agent of PARTHIA CARGO.

j. On or around September 2, 2017, MAHDAVI instructed PERSON A that import formalities regarding the shipment of the U.S.-origin commercial aircraft part to the U.A.E. should be handled by COMPANY 1.

k. On or around September 2, 2017, MAHDAVI instructed agents of COMPANY 2 in Iran that all customs expenses regarding the shipment of the U.S.-origin commercial aircraft part to the U.A.E. will be the responsibility of the buyer, i.e. COMPANY 2 in Iran.

l. On or around September 2, 2017, MAHDAVI and PERSON A spoke by

telephone regarding the instructions that MAHDAVI had made.

m. On or around September 2, 2017, PERSON A informed MAHDAVI that, consistent with MAHDAVI's instruction, COMPANY 1 would operate as the importer of the U.S.-origin commercial aircraft part into the U.A.E., and would deliver the item to an agent of PARTHIA CARGO.

23. A license from OFAC was required for the export or re-export of the U.S.-origin commercial aircraft part to Iran, but at no time did any person or entity apply for or obtain the required license from OFAC.

24. In the months after MAHDAVI's July 20, 2017, conversation with a U.S. government official, PARTHIA CARGO shipped numerous U.S.-origin goods from the U.A.E. to Iran without seeking or obtaining a license from OFAC., separate and apart from the conspiracy detailed in paragraph 22 above.

25. As set forth above, between at least on or about August 29, 2017, and on or about September 2, 2017, in the District of Columbia and elsewhere, MAHDAVI and PARTHIA CARGO knowingly and willfully combined, conspired, confederated, and agreed, with persons including COMPANIES 1 and 2, and PERSONS A and B, to defraud the United States and to commit offenses against the United States, more particularly by:

a. defrauding the United States, including the Department of the Treasury, by knowingly and willfully interfering with and obstructing a lawful government functions, that is, the enforcement of laws and regulations prohibiting the export and supply of goods from the United States to Iran, without authorization or a license, by deceit, craft, trickery, and dishonest means, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 371; and

b. committing offenses against the United States, by knowingly and willfully

exporting, attempting to export, conspiring to export, or causing to be exported, from the United States to Iran, a commercial aircraft part without obtaining the required license or other written authorization from the Department of the Treasury, in violation of 50 United States Code, Section 1705, and 18 United States Code, Section 371.

26. The goals of the conspiracy by MAHDAVI, PARTHIA CARGO, and their co-conspirators were as follows:

a. to purchase a U.S.-origin commercial aircraft part for shipment to Iran without a required license from OFAC;

b. to receive financial profits and other benefits from the purchase of a U.S.-origin commercial aircraft part for shipment to Iran without the required license from OFAC;

c. to conceal from U.S. persons and mislead the U.S. government, including OFAC, regarding the end user, use, and destination of a U.S.-origin commercial aircraft part shipped to Iran without the required license from OFAC; and

d. to evade and cause others to evade or violate the regulations, prohibitions, and licensing requirements of IEEPA and the ITSRs.

27. It was part of the conspiracy and scheme to defraud that MAHDAVI, PARTHIA CARGO, and certain of their co-conspirators:

a. planned and acted outside the United States to acquire a U.S.-origin commercial aircraft part from inside the United States;

b. used e-mail accounts and other methods of international communication to communicate with one another and with other individuals;

c. used COMPANY 1 for the purpose of purchasing and obtaining possession of a U.S.-origin commercial aircraft part;

d. caused COMPANY 3 in the United States to export a U.S.-origin commercial aircraft part to COMPANY 1 outside the United States;

e. intentionally concealed from COMPANY 3 that they intended to ship a U.S.-origin commercial aircraft part to Iran;

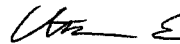
f. caused the U.S.-origin commercial aircraft part to be shipped from to the U.A.E, with the intention that it be shipped onwards from the U.A.E. to Iran; and

g. did not seek or obtain a license from OFAC at any time in connection with the intended export of the U.S.-origin commercial aircraft part from the United States to Iran, via countries outside the United States, including the U.A.E.

CONCLUSION

28. Based on the facts described above, there is probable cause to believe that MAHDAVI, and PARTHIA CARGO conspired to defraud the United States and to violate IEEPA by causing a U.S.-origin commercial aircraft part to be exported from the United States, destined for Iran, without a license.

Respectfully submitted,



Christopher M. Earley

Special Agent

Federal Bureau of Investigation

Attested to by the applicant in accordance with the requirements of Fed. R. Crim. P. 4.1 by telephone, this 19th day of August, 2020.

HON. G. MICHAEL HARVEY
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE