



NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE COUNCIL

MEMORANDUM

07 February 2020

NICM 2020-005

b3 Saudi Arabia: Crown Prince Probably Authorized Khashoggi Operation

(U) Scope Note

b3 This National Intelligence Council Memorandum serves as the classified annex associated with ODNI's response to Section 1277 of the 2020 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), "Report on Intelligence Community Assessment Relating to the Killing of Washington Post Columnist Jamal Khashoggi."

b1, b3 The IC assesses that Saudi Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman probably authorized the operation against Saudi dissident and US resident Jamal Khashoggi that resulted in Khashoggi's murder. b1, b3

b1, b3 direct involvement of one of the Crown Prince's closest advisers—Saud al-Qahtani—in Khashoggi's murder, and the Crown Prince's high level of control over the security institutions involved in the killing.

b1, b3 b1, b3

We assess Muhammad bin Salman was prepared to use force b1, b3

b1, b3 based on the Crown Prince's previous willingness to use harsh methods to crackdown on a broad array of

dissidents b1, b3

- (U) In October 2018, Turkish press reporting revealed the names of an alleged 15-member Saudi team that had flown into Istanbul on 2 October.
- b3 We assess that at least some of those officials worked for, or were associated with, the Saudi Center for Studies and Media Affairs (CSMARC) at the Royal Court. When the operation occurred, the CSMARC was led by Saud al-Qahtani, which reinforces our judgment that Qahtani was directly involved in the operation and that the Crown Prince probably authorized it, given the deferential nature of Qahtani's relationship with Muhammad bin Salman.

b1, b3 At the time of the Khashoggi murder, the Crown Prince b1, b3

b1, b3 probably fostered an environment in which aides were afraid that failure to complete assigned tasks might result in their firing or arrest. This suggests that aides were unlikely to question Muhammad bin Salman's orders or undertake sensitive actions without his consent.

(U) This memorandum was prepared under the auspices of the National Intelligence Officer (NIO) for the Near East. It was drafted by the National Intelligence Council b1, b3

Classified By: b3 | Derived From: b1, b3 Declassify On: b3

b1, b3

**b3 Individuals Involved in the Operation**

b1, b3 The IC has high confidence that the following individuals played some role, had knowledge of, or were otherwise involved in the killing of Jamal Khashoggi on behalf of Muhammad bin Salman: then CSMARC Director, Saud al-Qahtani;

b1, b3

b1, b3 Maher Mutril b1, b3 Naif al-Arifi, Mohammed al-Zahrani, Mansur Aba Husayn, and Badr al-Utaybah;

b1, b3 Abdul Aziz Al Hawsawi, Waleed Abdullah Al Shihri, Khalid Al Utaybah, Thaar Al Harbi, Mustafa Al Madani, Fahd Shiahb Al Balawi, Meshal al-Bustani, and Turki Al Shihri b1, b3 Saif Saad Al Qahtani b1, b3 Salah Muhammad al-Tubayq b1, b3 Mohammed Al Utaybah.

b1, b3