

'Plot to assassinate Putin' in Iran

By [Global Research](#)

Region: [Russia and FSU](#)

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Vladimir Putin, left, visited Germany on Sunday ahead of a planned trip to Iran [AFP]

The Russian president has been warned of a plot to assassinate him during a planned visit to Iran next week, according to Russia's Interfax news agency.

But Tehran has described as "totally baseless" the report, which said Russian security services had been told suicide bombers and kidnappers were training to kill or capture Vladimir Putin.

"Reports published by some media are totally baseless and are in line with the psychological war launched by enemies who want to harm Iran and Russia's relationship," Mohammad Ali Hosseini, foreign ministry spokesman, said on Sunday.

The Russian president is travelling to Tehran to attend a meeting a summit of the five states that surround the Caspian Sea, and Hosseini said this would go ahead as planned.

Putin is the first Kremlin leader to travel to Iran since Josef Stalin, the former Soviet leader, attended a wartime summit with Winston Churchill, former British prime minister, and Franklin D. Roosevelt, former US president, in 1943.

'Bombers preparing'

The Interfax report said that: "a reliable source in one of the Russian special services, has received information from several sources outside Russia, that during the president of Russia's visit to Tehran an assassination attempt is being plotted.

"It could be some international scheme, perhaps connected with Russia's enemies like the Chechens"

Fred Weir, Christian Science Monitor "A number of groups of suicide bombers are preparing for this aim."

The news agency quoted Kremlin sources as saying they had no comment on the report, but that the president had been informed.

Fred Weir, Moscow correspondent for the Christian Science Monitor newspaper, told Al Jazeera that assassination plots against the Russian leader had previously been discovered in Ukraine and Azerbaijan, both reportedly connected to the separatist movement in Chechnya.

"It could be some international scheme, perhaps connected with Russia's enemies like the Chechens," he said.

"Or it could be some elaborate rumour, in Russia we have this transitional phase, we are not sure if Putin is leaving his job or changing his job next year. All of this sort of thing excites power struggles and rumours are a major weapon in that."

Putin's second term as president ends next year and the constitution prevents him standing for a third consecutive term. He has said he will stand for parliament and could become prime minister.

Nuclear standoff

Putin is expected to meet Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the Iranian president during his visit, giving him a chance to attempt to find a peaceful solution to the standoff over Tehran's nuclear ambitions.

Although Russia has backed two rounds of punitive UN sanctions against Iran, Moscow says engagement is a more effective way of tackling the situation.

It has sold weapons to Iran, in defiance of US concerns, and is building a nuclear power station at Bushehr on the Persian Gulf.

Putin was visiting Angela Merkel, the German chancellor, on Sunday before travelling to the Iranian capital on Monday.

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