

## U.S. Rep. Dennis Kucinich denies knowing man accused of being a Syrian spy

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By **Sabrina Eaton, The Plain Dealer**

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- A Virginia man accused of acting as a spy for Syria denies espionage charges and says he visited the country earlier this year as part of a fact-finding delegation led by Cleveland Democratic congressman Dennis Kucinich, who denies knowing the man.

Mohamad Soueid, 47, of Leesburg, VA, was arrested last week and accused of spying on Syrian expatriates in the United States on behalf of the regime of President Bashar Assad, the **Associated Press** and **other media** are reporting. Soueid's supposed surveillance of Assad's U.S. detractors is alleged to be part of Syrian government efforts to intimidate expatriates who sympathize with a revolt against Assad.

Soueid's lawyer, Haytham Faraj, told a Monday detention hearing that Soueid is not a spy and visited Syria this summer as part of a **fact-finding mission led by Kucinich**. According to the Associated Press, Faraj said the purpose of the trip was "to speak to Mr. Assad about the negative consequences of the Syrian government's actions."

Kucinich's office told the news organization that Soueid was not part of his delegation and he does not know who he is.

"Whoever he is, it sounds like he has a serious problem with the truth," Kucinich said in a statement. "If in fact, he has spied upon U.S. citizens on behalf of the Syrian government that will have immediate consequences for the Assad regime."

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AP file

Rep. Dennis Kucinich.



Associated Press

This undated photo provided by the U.S. Attorney, Eastern District of Virginia and entered into evidence Monday at a detention hearing in U.S. District Court in Alexandria, Va., shows Mohamad Soueid, left, 47, of Leesburg, Va., meeting this summer with Syrian President Bashar Assad. Soueid is accused of acting as a Syrian spy. His lawyer said the meeting stems from Soueid's role in a fact-finding mission led by Democratic Rep. Dennis Kucinich, but Kucinich says he doesn't know Soueid and he wasn't on the fact-finding mission.

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