

R – Documents Related to the Syrian Arab Republic

Extract from Interview of IAEA Director General Mohamed ElBaradei

[by Wolf Blitzer, CNN, aired 28 October 2007]

[Eds...]

BLITZER: As you know, the Israelis, in early September, bombed some sort of facility in Syria that was suspected of being a nuclear reactor, maybe a nuclear reactor built on a North Korean model. I know you've seen these pictures. You've seen the before and the after. What's your conclusion? Was this a nuclear reactor that the Syrians were building in their country based on a North Korean model?

ELBARADEI: Wolf, I'm very distressed, frankly, about this Syrian bombing because nobody - there had been chatter for the last few years. John Bolton three years ago went to testify before Congress and said there is concern about Syria. And yet, until today, we have not received information about any nuclear-related activities, clandestine nuclear-related activities in Syria. The bombing, again, happened, and we never, until today, received any piece of information. That to me is very distressful because we have a system. If countries have information that the country is working on a nuclear-related program, they should come to us. We have the authority to go out and investigate. But to bomb first and then ask questions later, I think it undermines the system and it doesn't lead to any solution to any suspicion, because we are the eyes and ears of the international community. It's only the agencies and inspectors who can go and verify the information.

If Syria were working on a nuclear program, a clandestine program, then we'd obviously be able to draw the consequences. But today I don't know where to go. I didn't get any information. I contacted the Syrians. They said this is a military facility, has nothing to do with nuclear. And I would hope if anybody has information before they take the law into their own hands, to come and pass the information on.

BLITZER: So what you're suggesting, Dr. ElBaradei, is neither the Israelis nor the U.S. government - or for that matter, any other government - gave you any hard evidence to back up this claim that this was a North Korean modeled nuclear reactor.

ELBARADEI: Or any evidence at all. Not only hard evidence, Wolf.

BLITZER: I know you've seen some commercial satellite photos though of the before and after. Are there any conclusions you can draw based on what you've seen in those satellite photos?

ELBARADEI: These are commercial satellite photos that we procured ourselves, has not been providing to us. And we're still investigating them. We're still comparing the pre and after. But in addition to us buying commercial photos, I would very much hope that countries will come forward if they have information so we'll do - go through a due process.

BLITZER: We're almost out of time, but based on the commercial photos that you've seen from these satellite reconnaissance, are there any conclusions that you and your team have been able to come up with?

ELBARADEI: Not at this stage, Wolf. Not at all.

BLITZER: All right, and so it would be premature to allege that North Korea was proliferating in cooperation with the Syrians? Is that what you're saying as well?

ELBARADEI: That's correct.

BLITZER: Because I want to play a little clip of what the ranking Republican on the House Intelligence Committee, Peter Hoekstra, told me here on "Late Edition" last Sunday. Listen to this.

[Eds...]

BLITZER: Because he certainly seemed to be concerned, and he's among a handful of members of the U.S. Congress who have been briefed by the Bush administration on what the Israelis did in Syria. He seems to suggest that you can't trust the North Koreans

at all because they've been cheating on their promises. I take it you're not willing to go that far by a long shot.

ELBARADEI: I can't because I don't have any evidence to support that assumption, Wolf.

BLITZER: Would you like the Israelis to brief you on what they know?

ELBARADEI: Absolutely, or anybody who has information. But you can't trust anybody. We don't work on the base of trust. But we - as President Reagan said, "trust and verify." And what I want very much is to be able to verify whether Syria, in fact, were working on a nuclear power program in a clandestine way or not. And the only way to do that is get information and to go out and verify.

BLITZER: You have a lot of credibility in these areas, Dr. ElBaradei, because before the war started with Iraq and the removal of Saddam Hussein, you were contradicting the Bush administration, insisting there was absolutely no evidence that Iraq under Saddam Hussein was reconstituting its nuclear weapons program. Do you feel vindicated as a result of that, as you go into this next round of fears that Iran may be developing some sort of nuclear weapons program?

ELBARADEI: Well, Wolf, I don't necessarily feel vindicated. I feel relieved that we discovered that Iraq did not have nuclear weapons. I feel also that people now should listen to us, because we have no hidden agenda. All we want to do is bring the facts out. We should not take decisions that has to do - that crucial to war around peace before we are able 100 percent to make sure that the information on the basis we are working are accurate and professional.

BLITZER: Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei is the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency. Dr. ElBaradei, thanks very much for joining us. Good luck to you and your entire team.

ELBARADEI: Thank you very much, Wolf. Keep well.

BLITZER: Thank you.

Extract from Introductory Statement to the Board of Governors by IAEA Director General Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei

[2 June 2008, Vienna]

Implementation of Safeguards in the Syrian Arab Republic

In April of this year, the Agency was provided with information claiming that an installation destroyed by Israel in Syria last September was a nuclear reactor. According to this information, the reactor was not yet operational and no nuclear material had been introduced into it.

It is deeply regrettable that information concerning this installation was not provided to the Agency in a timely manner and that force was resorted to unilaterally before the Agency was given an opportunity to establish the facts, in accordance with its responsibilities under the NPT and Syria's Safeguards Agreement. I should like to remind everybody that NPT States Parties have unanimously reaffirmed that the Agency is the competent authority responsible for verifying and assuring, in accordance with its Statute and the Agency's safeguards system, compliance by States with their safeguards agreements.

Nonetheless, I should emphasize that Syria, like all States with comprehensive safeguards agreements, has an obligation to report the planning and construction of any nuclear facility to the Agency. We are therefore treating this information with the seriousness it deserves and have been in discussions with the Syrian authorities since this information was provided to the Agency with a view to arranging a visit to Syria at an early date to verify, to the extent possible at this stage, the veracity of the information available to the Agency. It has now been agreed that an Agency team will visit Syria during the period 22-24 June. I look forward to Syria's full cooperation in this matter.

**Extract from Introductory Statement to the
Board of Governors by IAEA Director General
Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei**

[22 September 2008, Vienna]

Implementation of Safeguards in the Syrian Arab Republic

In April this year, the Agency received information claiming that an installation destroyed by Israel in September 2007 at Al Kibar in Syria was a nuclear reactor. The Syrian authorities have repeatedly stated that the alleged site was not involved in any nuclear activities.

With Syria's cooperation, the Agency was able to visit Al Kibar in June 2008. Samples taken from the site are still being analysed and evaluated by the Agency, but so far we have found no indication of any nuclear material.

In order to assess the veracity of information available to the Agency, we asked the Syrian authorities in July to provide access to additional information and locations. Syria has not yet responded to this request but has indicated that any further developments would depend on the results of the samples taken during the first visit.

I trust that Syria will show maximum cooperation and transparency and provide all the information needed by the Agency to complete its assessment.

**Extract from Statement of the Syrian Arab
Republic to the 52nd Session of the General
Conference of the IAEA**

[29 September – 4 October 2008]

[Eds...]

We regrettably listened to the statements of some states requesting more transparency and cooperation with the Agency from our side. I would like here to recall that the Director General and the Deputy Director General for Safeguards have indicated in the September meeting of the Board of Governors that Syria was cooperative and complied with the procedures agreed upon with the agency.

We confirm that the government of my country is and will continue to be totally cooperative and transparent with the agency. However, this cooperation will under no circumstances be on the account of exposing our military positions and threatening our national security.

[Eds...]

**Extract from Introductory Statement to the
Board of Governors by IAEA Director General
Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei**

[27 November 2008, Vienna]

Implementation of Safeguards in the Syrian Arab Republic

In June this year, I informed the Board that the Agency had been provided with information alleging that an installation destroyed by Israel in Syria in September 2007 was a nuclear reactor. Syria has stated that the Dair Alzour site was a military site and was not involved in any nuclear activities.

The Agency has, in accordance with its responsibility under comprehensive safeguards agreements, conducted a thorough analysis of all information available to it. As I mentioned in my report, the Agency was severely hampered in its assessment by the unilateral use of force and by the late provision of information about the destroyed building. The destruction of the building and the subsequent removal of the debris made the Agency's verification work quite difficult and complex, rendering the results so far inconclusive.

For its assessment of the site immediately after the bombing, the Agency was unable to obtain commercial satellite imagery. It is regrettable, and indeed baffling, that imagery for this critical period, which would have been most valuable in helping to clarify the

nature of the building that was destroyed, was not available. The Agency has recently been able to secure agreement to show Syria imagery from Member State satellites of the site shortly after the bombing, and will do so at the earliest opportunity.

Analysis of environmental samples from the Dair Alzour site revealed a significant number of natural uranium particles, which had been produced as a result of chemical processing. Syria stated that the only explanation for these particles was that they were contained in the missiles used to destroy the building. The Agency is assessing Syria's claim. We have asked Syria to permit the Agency to visit the locations of debris and equipment removed from the site in order to take samples that would help us to assess the origin of the uranium and also to ascertain the possible existence of any nuclear grade graphite that is normally associated with the type of alleged reactor. The Agency has also asked Israel to provide detailed information concerning Syria's claims regarding the origin of the uranium particles.

As stated in the report, while it cannot be excluded that the building in question was intended for non-nuclear use, the features of the building, along with the availability of adequate pumping capacity of cooling water, are similar to what may be found in connection with a reactor site. In light of this, it is important that Syria provide the Agency with documentation in support of its statements concerning the nature and function of the destroyed building.

Syria should also agree, as a transparency measure, to let the Agency visit other locations. As I mentioned in the case of Iran, I am confident that modalities can be developed which will protect the confidentiality of military information while enabling the Agency to continue with its assessment.

For the Agency to complete its assessment, maximum transparency by Syria and the full sharing with the Agency of all relevant information which other States may have are essential.

**Extract from Introductory Statement to the
Board of Governors by IAEA Director General
Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei**

[2 March 2009, Vienna]

***Implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement in the
Syrian Arab Republic***

The Agency has continued its analysis of all information available to it, including from the 23 June 2008 visit to the Dair Alzour site. Further analysis of the environmental samples taken from the Dair Alzour site has been carried out, revealing additional particles of uranium which had been produced as a result of chemical processing. These particles, and those identified as a result of the previous analyses, are of a type not included in Syria's declared inventory of nuclear material. Syria has stated that the origin of the uranium particles was the missiles used to destroy the building. In response to a letter from the Agency, Israel denied that the uranium particles originated in Israel. The Agency's current assessment is that there is a low probability that the uranium was introduced by the use of missiles.

In a letter dated 15 February 2009, Syria reiterated that the destroyed facility, and the current facility, on the Dair Alzour site were military installations and not involved in any nuclear activities. The letter did not address many of the questions raised by the Agency. Syria's responses to some of the Agency's questions were only partial and included information already provided to the Agency.

The Agency expects Syria to provide additional information and supporting documentation about the past use and nature of the building at the Dair Alzour site, and information about procurement activities. Providing additional access to other locations alleged to be related to Dair Alzour would be a welcome sign of Syria's transparency. Such access, together with the sampling of destroyed and salvaged equipment and debris, is essential for the Agency to complete its assessment. I urge Syria to take these measures at the earliest possible date. I also urge Israel and other States that may possess relevant information - including satellite imagery - to make it available to the Agency and to agree to the Agency's sharing of such information with Syria.