

## US to focus on uranium findings in Syria - evidence of Iranian proliferation

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A senior official in the Obama administration described the UN nuclear watchdog inspectors' discovery of traces of highly processed plutonium at the bombed Syrian-North Korean facility at Dir a-Zur as a "smoking gun" - evidence of Iran's covert nuclear activities and proliferation, DEBKAfile's Washington sources report.

It was confirmed by International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors in their Nov. 30 visit to the site which was demolished by Israel in September 2007.

Obama administration sources are confident that with this information of Iranian violations of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, even Russia and China will have to endorse stiff new sanctions against the Islamic Republic.

The soil samples the inspectors collected at their last visit to Dir a-Zur confirmed an earlier discovery of uranium used in separating out bomb-grade plutonium from spent nuclear fuel which the US believes was supplied by Iran. Those experiments were clearly further along that previously assessed.

The same traces were found at the Syrian nuclear research reactor near Damascus.

Washington intends to present these findings as solid evidence of the tie-in between the Syrian and Iranian military nuclear programs, together with proofs of Tehran's direct involvement in the planning and construction of the demolished Syria reactor.

Iran will also be shown to have supplied Syria with the nuclear materials and technology for its operation as part of its own program to attain a nuclear weapons capability.

The US will use this body of evidence to demonstrate Iran has been in grave breach of its NPT obligations since 2007. This week, officials in Tehran said their government has no plans to abdicate from the treaty.

According to DEBKAfile's Washington sources, the Obama administration may decide to plant the information in the US and world media before making a formal presentation.

Last Thursday, Dec. 3, Iran's national security council director Saeed Jalili visited Damascus for urgent consultations with Syrian leaders on fending off the coming American assault on its nuclear program based on the evidence of Syria covert nuclear activities. His party included members of Iran's nuclear energy commission who helped build the Syria's North Korean reactor.

Jalili and Syrian president Bashar Assad spent several hours discussing how to respond to the forthcoming American revelations.

Their talks were violently interrupted by the bomb blast on an Iranian pilgrim bus in central Damascus. Official figures have not been released but the number of dead is believed to be fifteen Iranians with many more injured. Assad ordered Syrian officials on the spot to claim the blast was an accident and not an act of terror. Both sides assumed that the hand behind the attack had advance knowledge of the Iranian-Syrian conference and was bent on sabotaging it.

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