

Additional nuclear sites in Syria?

Contributed by Counter Terrorism Blog
Saturday, 27 October 2007

By Olivier Guitta

While proof of a Syrian nuclear site is trickling down, including in this Washington Post article, the question now remains: what exactly do we know about the Syrian nuclear program?

Last night, The Croissant ran a story from the Kuwaiti Al Seyassah about potential new secret nuclear sites in Syria. Here is an excerpt:

Western sources think that Syrian intelligence provided some information on the facility bombed on September 6 by the Israeli air force in order to focus the attention just on this particular site while work goes on at other secret sites. Indeed, observation satellites have allegedly located in Syria at least 2 other sites similar to the one destroyed last month.

Back in December 2006, I wrote an article for The Examiner on Syria's nuclear program. Here is an excerpt:

Indeed, while world attention is rightly focused on the nuclear capabilities of Iran and North Korea, Syria has been quietly — but quickly — advancing its own secret nuclear program.

The first signs appeared in 2003 when the Russian Foreign Ministry inadvertently revealed that a Russian-Syrian agreement for the delivery of a nuclear power plant in an undisclosed Syrian location had been signed.

In 2004, Syrian President Bashar Assad made a point to say that Syria would not dispose of its WMD program until Israel did the same. “Since some of my country is occupied,” Assad added, “Syria can legitimately use all the necessary means to liberate its territories.”

German magazine Der Spiegel revealed in March 2004 that Swedish authorities and the CIA were investigating a very likely Syrian nuclear program secretly developed in Homs in the northern part of the country. That July, investigators looking into the Pakistani nuclear network of A.Q. Khan pointed out that Syria may have procured centrifuges capable of enriching uranium to produce a bomb.

This fact was confirmed in May 2006 in a declassified report to the U.S. Congress on the acquisition of technology relating to weapons of mass destruction. Before the 2003 invasion of Iraq, Syria also got help from Saddam Hussein's regime.

Keep in mind that Syria's economy was very dependent on Iraq's trade, especially oil-smuggling revenues. Sunday Telegraph journalist Con Coughlin affirmed in a September 2004 article that 12 Iraqi nuclear scientists — who were transferred to Syria and given new identities before the war — were on their way to Iran to assist their counterparts there in building a nuclear weapon. “The results of the research would then be shared with Syria,” Coughlin added.

But what really broke the camel's back was a recent report from the well-informed Kuwaiti daily newspaper Al Seyassah. It quoted European intelligence sources as saying that “Syria has an advanced nuclear program” in a secret site located in the province of Al Hassaka, close to the Turkish and Iraqi borders. British sources quoted by the paper believe that “it is President Assad's brother, Colonel Maher Assad and his cousin Rami Makhoulouf, who supervise the program.”

You can read the rest here. [October 25, 2007 09:44 AM Link](#)