

THE AXIS OF FALSE INTELLIGENCE CLAIMS

Fill in the blanks:

[ISIS President David] Albright said yesterday that the tubes acquired by _____ needed to be cut in half and shaped in order to be used as the outer casing of centrifuges. If _____ proves that the tubes were untouched, he said, it could "shatter the argument" that they were meant for a uranium program.

Let's see, WMD expert David Albright describing doubts about claims that a country was using aluminum tubes to build a nuclear centrifuge. It must be the debate over Iraq's aluminum tubes, right?

No. It's the growing debate over whether US claims that North Korea had a large-scale uranium enrichment program have any basis in fact.

North Korea is providing evidence to the United States aimed at proving that it never intended to produce highly enriched uranium for nuclear weapons, undermining a key U.S. intelligence finding, South Korean and U.S. officials said this week.

In closely held talks, the North Korean government has granted U.S. experts access to equipment and documents to make its case, in preparation for declaring the extent of its nuclear activities before the end of the year. North Korean officials hope the United States will simultaneously lift sanctions against Pyongyang as the declaration is made.

If North Korea successfully demonstrates

that U.S. accusations about the uranium-enrichment program are wrong, it will be a blow to U.S. intelligence and the Bush administration's credibility.

"It will be a blow to US intelligence and the Bush administration's credibility" is a bit of an understatement, I think. If North Korea can prove their case, it'll mean that the claims about the WMD aspirations of two out of three of the members of the "Axis of Evil" will have proven to be false. In fact, it'll mean that the same tale—Administration claims that a country was altering aluminum tubes to make centrifuge parts—will have proven false twice.

Add in the fact that Cheney has refused to allow the Intelligence Community publish an unclassified NIE debunking Administration claims about an imminent Iranian WMD threat, and we're facing that **the distinct possibility that the claimed threat of all three members of the "Axis of Evil" is false**. The central narrative of this Administration—us against the rogue states—potentially false.

Nice.

One more detail. Note that Glenn Kessler, he of the Condi bio, got this scoop. At the least, this means **State** is telling us that the North Korea claims may be false. Is Condi getting weary of sustaining one after another WMD lie?