

IRAN'S CAT AND MOUSE GAME AT PARCHIN CONTINUES; ALBRIGHT TAKES BAIT YET AGAIN

After a disappointing ending to yesterday's final session of the P5+1 talks in Moscow, we now must deal with even more of the cat and mouse game Iran is playing at Parchin. I have posted on this issue a number of times, so I won't go back into the complete details of what is going on, but the primary issue here is that the West has accused Iran of carrying out work at the Parchin military site that is aimed toward developing a trigger for a nuclear bomb. Specifically, Iran is accused of using a high explosives chamber to research the use of uranium in high explosions to generate the neutrons needed to trigger a nuclear bomb. "Western diplomats", aided by gullible reporters and especially by David Albright of the Institute for Science and International Security are now claiming that Iran is trying to scrub the site of evidence from this work.

The problem is that it is impossible to scrub evidence of this sort of work. As I showed in this post, if Iran actually carried out the work for which they are accused, the steel chamber where the explosions occurred and all of the structural steel in the surrounding building would be radioactive due to neutron activation. This would not be surface contamination of the steel but would be distributed throughout the entire thickness of the steel. Therefore, if Iran carried out the accused work, the only way to hide the evidence would be to destroy the steel tank and the building in which it is housed.

In a game of cat and mouse, Iran destroyed buildings nearby the building in which the steel tank is said to be housed and did extensive earthmoving work in outlying areas away from the

building. Albright dutifully took that bait and said this work was evidence of cleansing activity and did not mention that the chamber and its surrounding building were still standing and should still carry all of the radioactive earmarks of the accused activity.

Today, Albright has taken the next round of bait offered up by Iran. More earthmoving activity is seen in new photos and there are even new puddles to go along with the first puddles Albright found.

Here is Albright's description of the new activity:

The latest satellite imagery from June 7, 2012 shows continued activity at the site where the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) suspects Iran may have conducted high explosive compression related to the development of nuclear weapons. The image shows heavy machinery tracks and earth displacement throughout the site. The debris from one of the razed buildings visible in the imagery from May 25, 2012 has now been consolidated into piles just north of the site of the former building (figure 1). There is evidence of earth moving machinery and excavation activity near the second demolished building north of the building suspected to contain the high explosive testing chamber.

Clearly defined roads that previously led to several of the buildings (figures 2 and 3) are no longer discernible due to machinery traffic or earth removal. The security barrier that previously ran along the perimeter of the site has also been removed. Areas close to the suspect building that contained access roads and vegetation now appear to have been bulldozed or disturbed by machinery (compare figures 1, 2, and 3).

The latest imagery also shows a notable amount of water flow from nearby an object placed next to the alleged high explosive testing building. It is hard to distinguish what the object is or the purpose of the water. The water flows into areas that have seen considerable activity due to heavy machinery traffic or earth removal, activities which appear likely to persist.

Iran's activities at the Parchin site have raised concerns about Iranian efforts to destroy evidence of possible high explosive tests at this site. The IAEA has asked repeatedly to visit this site, but so far Iran has refused. In the May 25, 2012 IAEA safeguards report on Iran, the IAEA stated that "based on satellite imagery, at this location, where virtually no activity had been observed for a number of years, the buildings of interest to the Agency are now subject to extensive activities that could hamper the Agency's ability to undertake effective verification."

Once again, Albright fails to point out that there should be radioactive signatures of neutron work throughout the building housing the steel explosive chamber and that the building still appears to be intact. It is especially fun that in previous posts and discussions, it was pointed out here that the first puddles Albright found would have indicated to the IAEA exactly where to dig for any radioactivity that may have been washed out of the building in question and that Iran had not yet made any effort to excavate the parking lot where the puddles were. In this new photo, the parking lot has been excavated at the site of the first puddles, but new ones overlay it.

Very well played by Iran.