

Cheney hand seen behind leaks of ‘misleading’ stories

US intelligence does not show Syrian nuclear weapons program, officials say

By [Global Research](#)

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Allegations that a Syrian envoy admitted during a United Nations meeting Oct. 17 that an Israeli air strike hit a nuclear facility in September are inaccurate and have raised the ire of some in the US intelligence community, who see the Vice President's hand as allegedly being behind the disinformation.

A United Nations press release discussing the General Assembly's Disarmament Committee meeting mistranslated comments ascribed to an unnamed Syrian diplomat as saying that Israel had on various occasions "taken action against nuclear facilities, including the 6 July attack in Syria."

The UN has since gone through the tape recordings of the meeting and found that there was no mention of the word "nuclear" at all. According to the UN, the error [was one of translation](#), involving several interpreters translating the same meeting.

Recent news articles, however, continue to make allegations and suggest that a nuclear weapons facility was hit — something that the Syrian government has denied, the Israeli government has not officially confirmed and US intelligence does not show.

According to current and former intelligence sources, the US intelligence community has seen no evidence of a nuclear facility being hit.

US intelligence "found no radiation signatures after the bombing, so there was no uranium or plutonium present," said one official, wishing to remain anonymous due to the sensitivity of the subject.

"We don't have any independent intelligence that it was a nuclear facility — only the assertions by the Israelis and some ambiguous satellite photography from them that shows a building, which the Syrians admitted was a military facility."

Their statements come as officials [claim](#) Syria has begun to 'disassemble' the site. An article today quotes former Administration hawk and onetime Bush United Nations Ambassador John Bolton, who links Syria's alleged action with Iran.

Israel has not spoken publicly about the air raid, other than to confirm that it happened. The confirmation came nearly a month after the Sept. 6 bombing, and [provided only](#) that "Israeli officials said the strike took place deep inside Syria."

“‘Radiation signatures’ are just the particular type of radiation that some activity would give off,” Dr. Ivan Oelrich, a [nuclear weapons expert](#) at the Strategic Security Project at the Federation of American Scientists, told RAW STORY. “For example, a nuclear bomb would produce a lot of radioactivity and a nuclear reactor explosion would produce a lot of radioactivity but if you measure it carefully so you can tell, not just that it is radioactive, but exactly what particular isotopes are contributing, then it is easy to tell the difference.

“If a reactor explodes or is blown up then I can, with careful measurements of the particular types of radiation, tell what the fuel was for the reactor and how long the reactor had been running when it was hit,” Oelrich added. “It gets complicated because you have to take into account how different species are transported in the air, how fast they decay, etc. but it can be done.”

An [earlier report](#) by Raw Story cited Vincent Cannistraro, Director of Intelligence Programs for the National Security Council under President Ronald Reagan and Chief of Operations at the Central Intelligence Agency’s Counterterrorism Center under President George H. W. Bush, as saying that what the Israelis hit was “absolutely not a nuclear weapons facility.”

The Central Intelligence Agency, through a spokesman, declined to comment.

Administration said to leak stories to press

One US intelligence source familiar with the events expressed concern about recent news reports describing Syria as having a functioning nuclear weapons program and cautioned against attributing those reports to the US intelligence community.

“The allegations that North Korea was helping to build a nuclear reactor have not been substantiated by US intelligence,” said this intelligence official, adding, “ but that hasn’t stopped Dick Cheney and his minions at the NSC, Elliot Abrams and Steve Hadley, from leaking the information [to the press], which appears to be misleading in the extreme.”

Requests for comment to the National Security Council went unanswered.

Elliot Abrams, who currently serves as the Deputy National Security Adviser for Global Democracy Strategy, was convicted during the Iran-Contra scandal for withholding information from Congress. He was pardoned by President George H. W. Bush along with other Iran-Contra players, some of whom have reappeared in the current Bush administration.

Iran Contra was a criminal scandal in which the Reagan-Bush White House sold weapons to Iran – an avowed enemy of the United States – then funneled the money to extremist anti-Communist group of guerrilla fighters called the Contras, who were fighting the democratically elected government of Nicaragua.

A failed coup in 2002 against Venezuelan President, Hugo Chavez, is also attributed to the approval of Abrams, according to [an investigation](#) by the UK *Guardian*.

Prior to the Iraq war, now-National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley was an integral part of misleading intelligence dissemination and approved clandestine meetings between Iranian arms dealer Manucher Ghorbanifar and members of a secretive cabal inside the Department of Defense’s controversial Office of Special Plans.

During a 2006 interview with neoconservative scholar Michael Ledeen, Raw Story was able to obtain the first on the record confirmation of the trips having been approved by the National Security Council, including the then National Security Advisor, Condoleezza Rice:

“Obviously Hadley did not unilaterally do anything. The Pentagon paid for the expenses of the two DOD officials, and the American ambassador in Rome was fully briefed both before and after the meetings,” [Ledeen said](#).

What concerns intelligence officials is what appears to be manipulation of the press and strategic leaks to the public of false information, undercutting professional intelligence analysis, similar to what occurred before the Iraq war in an apparent effort to bolster support for engaging Iran.

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