

Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei
Director General
International Atomic Energy Agency
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Austria

29 July 2004

Dear Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei,

As you are no doubt aware, following reports that Iraq's largest nuclear facility, Tuwaitha, had been substantially 'looted' in the immediate wake of the Iraq war, Greenpeace sent a small team in to investigate in June 2003. According to a pre-war inventory submitted to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) by the Iraqi government, Tuwaitha contained some 500 tonnes of radioactive 'yellow cake'; six tonnes of depleted uranium; 27.5 tonnes of uranium oxide. Further, the site reputedly held up to 400 'industrial' radiation sources.

In a very short time period, working with the communities which ring fence the facility, the Greenpeace team found:

- a huge "yellow cake" mixing canister, with approximately 4-5 kilos of radioactive uranium inside, abandoned on open ground near a village;
- radioactivity in a series of houses, including one 'industrial' source registering 10,000 times above normal background radiation levels;
- another 'industrial' source outside a 900 pupil primary school registering 3,000 times above normal background radiation levels;
- locals who were storing radioactive barrels and lids in their houses;
- a small radioactive 'industrial' source abandoned in a field;
- several objects carrying radioactive symbols discarded in the local towns and villages; and
- consistent and repeated stories of unusual sickness after coming into contact with material from the Tuwaitha plant.

In response to the recent announcement that IAEA Inspectors will (finally) return to the facility, Greenpeace has developed a video compilation of these alarming findings for the IAEA's use. The coverage shows strong industrial radioactive sources and yellow cake found in people's houses and on the street, as well as several worrisome shots of looted equipment from a radiological laboratory and (metal) objects from radioisotope packaging. Greenpeace has also commissioned a technical analysis and description of the of the items in the video from an independent nuclear engineer. This analysis will be forwarded to you as soon as it becomes available.

Greenpeace is seriously concerned that the looting of the Tuwaitha facility had been so extensive by the time our team arrived, that it will be virtually impossible for a team of inspectors to reconstruct the radioactive inventory prior to the invasion. And these concerns have been considerably exacerbated in the last weeks following the revelation that the US has airlifted considerable quantities of nuclear material from the area without IAEA oversight.

During the upcoming inspection, the IAEA team MUST identify the radioisotopes and other dangerous materials still missing. In this respect, Greenpeace believes it essential that the US government release a full inventory of the radioactive materials it secretly airlifted out of Iraq. When it comes to the possibility of loose nukes and terrorists building so-called dirty bombs, US assurances that "roughly" 1000 highly radioactive sources have been taken out of harms way with the airlift are

simply not good enough. The US administration must reveal how many are in the US now, how many were in Iraq and how many could be missing.

However, even with the details of the material removed by the US, it will remain very difficult to determine the quantities and types of radioactive material that have been moved off site, some of which have been dispersed amongst the local communities.

The IAEA must be asking the following questions:

- How many radioisotopes are still in the local communities and dangerously irradiating local people?
- Does the metal scrap looted from the nuclear facility being melted cause radiation exposure to the workers?

In addition, the Iraqi government and the IAEA should not only be concerned about the isotopes scattered in Iraq. In recent weeks, nuclear material from Iraq has been found in both the Netherlands and Turkey, showing that nuclear material can and does leave the country. Obviously this has potentially very serious consequences.

In developing the inventory, the IAEA must ask the following questions:

- how many isotopes could have left Iraq?
- How many could have made their way onto the black market?

Finally, a year has passed without an adequate public health and environmental survey being conducted under the supervision of international experts - as one would have expected in any other part of the world after such an event. Greenpeace finds this unacceptable.

For over 14 months the US led coalition government has denied the IAEA free access to Iraq. Greenpeace has been active in calling for the return of the IAEA to the Tuwaitha facility, and is pleased to see that the new Iraqi administration has seen fit to invite the IAEA to return so quickly. However, upon its return, Greenpeace is calling upon the IAEA to secure two key objectives:

- full public disclosure of past and present inventories under the authority of the IAEA - to give confidence that dangerous materials have not made their way onto the nuclear black market.

- a comprehensive IAEA/UNEP environmental and public health survey of the Tuwaitha area - only a proper survey in the surrounding communities can prevent further radiological exposure of the local people.

We would appreciate a response on the matters raised at your earliest convenience. If you have any questions about the contents of the enclosed video do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

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CC: Jacques Baute, Director, Iraq Nuclear Verification Office
CC: Pierre Goldschmidt, Director, Department of Safeguards
CC: Mark Gwozdecky, Director, Division of Public Information