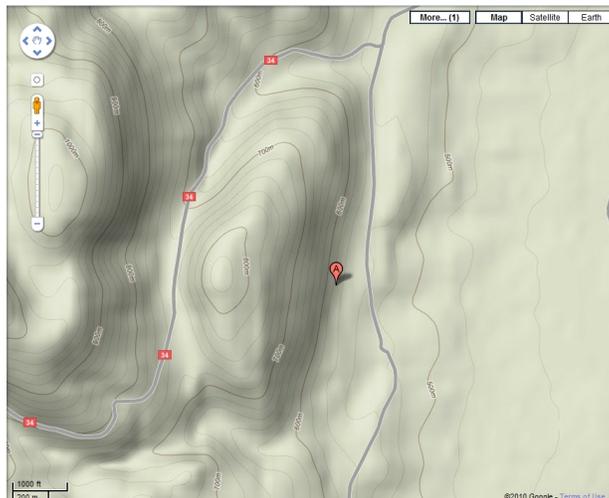


# Allegations of Iraqi Chemical Weapons Transported to Syria and Possible Tunnel Adits at Al-Bayda, Syria

Version of 2014-06-22



Summary: In early January, 2004, an expatriate Syrian journalist gave interviews on Dutch and British television describing information he had received from an informant in the Syrian military. The informant wrote that Iraq, before the American invasion in 2003, had shipped chemical weapons to Syria, where they were stored in three sites. One of those sites was said to be in a tunnel in a mountain next to the village of Al Bayda, two kilometers south of Masyaf. Available satellite imagery confirms that there is a high, steep mountain immediately to the east of Al Bayda and that, at the foot of the mountain, there are three structures that appear to be tunnel (“adit”) entrances. The quality of the available imagery is, as yet, too poor to allow any further conclusions to be drawn.



“Dear Nizar.

We received confirmations that the Iraqi weapons, which were moved to Syria by the help of General Zoul-Himla Chalich are now hidden in three places inside Syria:

First place: a tunnel dug in the mountain close to the Al-Baidah village, which is roughly two kilometers from Misyaf village. This place is under the 489 Safety cipher Documents’ office control .

Second place: the factory of the Air Armed Forces in the village of Tal Sinan, between the town of Hama and Salamiyyah. This factory is under the Air Force control.

Third place: the location of Shinsar, 40 kilometers south of Homs, two kilometers east of the Homs – Damascus road. There are underground tunnels there, controlled by Brigade 661 of the armed air Forces. It is a Brigade of air Patrol. The tunnels are several tens of meters deep.

The weapons were transported in large wooden cases and barrels, under the supervision of the General Zoul-Himla Chalich and the son of his brother Assef, who works at Al-Bachaer company.

The company is owned by the Assad family and has offices in Beirut, Damascus and Baghdad.

This company also undertook the illegal Iraqi oil importation in Syria, and supplied weapons to Saddam. I will try to send you all the new information as i get .

Take care and be safe.”



Second Message to Nizar Nayuf

“Dear Nizar.

I have sent you another chart of the positions which tells where the weapons which were sent from Iraq into Syria, are hidden. Because the preceding chart that I sent you earlier is not clear.

Until now, the authorities in Syria did not worry of what was being published by the Dutch television news about this subject.

New information: The weapons were evacuated by the means of ambulances. Mohammed Mansoura also took part in the operation.

There are other serious, detailed pieces of information concerning the money of Saddam being moved into Syria and into Lebanon and those who took part in moving it – Syrians and Lebanese. Also there are more details about the assassination of the General Moustapha Tajar which took place last summer.

Take care of yourself.

Damascus, January 7, 2004.”

January 12, 2004 8:34 AM

## The Wmd Road to Damascus

Are Iraq's missing weapons in Syria? An exiled Syrian journalist says "yes."

It's the question that has dominated the postwar Iraq debate: Where are Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction? Do they exist, or did none remain in Iraq's arsenal after they were used on the Kurds? If they do, why have American inspection teams not found them in the nearly yearlong period since the war ended?

One of the most troubling and intriguing theories has been the idea that Hussein smuggled them to Syria or some other nation before the war began. Now Nizar Nayyof, an exiled Syrian journalist now living in Paris, claims to have contact with a Syrian military intelligence official who is confirming that theory.

Speaking to the British television station ITN Friday, Nayyof said that his source says he knows three sites where Iraq's WMDs are kept.

"It has been confirmed that the Iraqi weapons which were smuggled into Syria through the intermediary of Colonel Zu Alhima Shalish are now located in three different places," the Syrian source reportedly wrote in Arabic to Nayyof. "The first of these places is a tunnel on the mountain slope near the village of Baida, which is situated two kilometers from Misyaf. This place is under the jurisdiction of Department 489, which deals with coded messages and documents."

"The second of these places is a factory owned by the air force in the village of Tal Sinan, which is situated between the two cities of Hamma and Salmiyah. The third of these places is the town of Shinshar, which is situated 40 kilometers to the south of Hums and 3 kilometers to the east of the Damascus-Hums highway. There are underground tunnels there, which belong to Brigade 661 of the air force. This is a reconnaissance force. These tunnels are several meters deep."

Nayyof's source contends that the weapons, likely missile parts and chemicals, were transferred in large wooden boxes and barrels, under the supervision of Colonel Zu Alhima Shalish and his nephew Assef, who works for the Albashair Company, which is owned by the Assads and has offices in Beirut, Damascus, and Baghdad. The source says that this company was also responsible for the smuggling of Iraqi oil to Syria and providing weapons to Saddam's regime.

The source also shared one more interesting detail: the weapons were smuggled across the border to these sites in ambulances.

"The persons who were responsible for such actions know of course that American satellites will see the big cars, and maybe they will estimate that something is dangerous," Nayyof said. "So they put them in ambulance cars—when I see ambulance cars of course I will think everything is ok, people are being carried to hospital, to other countries, no one will suspect."

The British Foreign Office and the Central Intelligence Agency confirmed to ITN that they are aware of the allegations.

The first question that comes up from hearing this rumor is, *Why would Saddam ship weapons to a state he had never liked and often had disagreements with?*

“Syria decided to [position itself] against the Coalition, against the attack,” Nayyoub told ITV. “It has a problem with the U.S. and U.K. because of that. In my opinion, when Saddam discovered that he will lose everything, including the weapons, he decided to send them to Syria in order not to lose them for nothing. And Syria, according to my information, Syria agreed with the regime of Saddam before he collapsed. They sent intelligence men inside Iraq to help the Iraqi resistance.”

Then next natural question is, *What did Syrian President Bashar Assad have to gain? Why would he take an action that would put him squarely in the American crosshairs?*

“Firstly money,” Nayyoub told ITV. “The Syrian regime like to be in federation of mafias. I think this description is right. . . . This business man doesn’t understand anything except money, like any mafia man, not for political reasons.”

Nayyoub added that, “Like Saddam’s regime [Assad] must be punished. But I hope we don’t see an American army in Damascus.”

The idea of Syria taking Iraq’s weapons is theoretically possible, but highly unlikely, says Joseph Cirincione, senior associate and director of the Non-Proliferation Project at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

“We got into a lot of trouble in Iraq by listening to exiles and dissidents,” he says, speculating that some dissidents may exaggerate or invent claims for attention, money, asylum, or influence. He says that he doesn’t want to dismiss an exile’s reports that Syria has Iraq’s weapons, but that he would want to see a great deal more supporting evidence before considering this source credible.

Cirincione just completed work on a Carnegie Endowment report concluding that the Bush administration had systematically misrepresented the weapons threat from Iraq.

“It is unlikely that Iraq could have destroyed, hidden or sent out of the country the hundreds of tons of chemical and biological weapons, dozens of Scud missiles and facilities engaged in the ongoing production of chemical and biological weapons that officials claimed were present without the United States detecting some sign of this,” the report states.

Cirincione believes that Iraq’s ability to produce chemical weapons on a large scale was destroyed by the 1991 Gulf war and by U.N. sanctions and inspections.

Carnegie’s report, entitled “WMD in Iraq: Evidence and Implications,” urges the Bush administration to discard its policy of unilateral preventive war. However, the report also states that Iraq still apparently maintained an active program to produce missiles capable of flying beyond the range permitted by the U.N. Security Council. And it states Iraq could have been able to resume banned programs, such as biological weapons production, quickly in the future.

Detailed and fascinating as Nayyoub’s information might be, it won’t actually change anything unless the CIA, MI6, or some other intelligence agency can produce some corroborating evidence. If ITV and NRO readers know about this information, then it’s safe to assume Assad knows it’s out there as well, and those weapons, if they exist in Syria, have presumably been

moved. Perhaps that other NRO, the National Reconnaissance Office, can show ambulances moving objects to that site from before the war, or from that site now. Or perhaps a source on the ground could detect traces of the chemicals stored there.

But until that happens, the situation regarding Saddam's weapons in Syria will be a mirror image of the situation before the Iraq war...suspicions, rumors, and circumstantial evidence, without a smoking gun.

*—Jim Geraghty, a reporter for States News Service in Washington, D.C., is a contributor to NRO*

## 'Vernietigingswapens Irak verstoppt in Syrië'

door de redactie

ma 05 jan 2004, 00:22



AMSTERDAM - De Iraakse massavernietigingswapens De dissidente journalist Nizar Najouf - die in 2000 in gevangenschap de Unesco-prijs voor persvrijheid kreeg toegekend - speelde zaterdag een brief en landkaart met de exacte locaties van zeer geheime bergplaatsen door aan De Telegraaf.

Najouf noemde tijdens een ontmoeting in een café te Parijs de precieze plaatsen, waar zich onder meer chemische wapens bevinden, die de Amerikanen en Britten al lange tijd koortsachtig zouden zoeken.

**Om te beginnen gaat het om een tunnel in een berg bij Al-Baida, op twee kilometer van Masjaf.**

Een tweede bergplaats is een fabriek van de Syrische luchtmacht in het dorpje Tal Snan, gelegen tussen Hama en Salamijja. Een derde vindplaats ligt bij Sjinsjar, oostelijk van de weg tussen Hama en Damascus. Op enkele tientallen meters diepte liggen hier wapens opgeslagen in tunnels, die het 661e bataljon van de luchtmacht in gebruik heeft. De drie hotspots liggen in het westelijk deel van Centraal- Syrië. Volgens de opsteller van de brief, zijn de wapens met houten kisten en vaten aangevoerd, onder verantwoordelijkheid van de chef van de presidentiële lijfwacht, generaal Zoel Himma Sjaliesj. Hierbij kreeg deze steun van zijn neef Asaf, werkzaam bij de firma Bacha-Ir, dat eigendom is van de presidentiële familie Assad. Het bedrijf heeft vestigingen in Beiroet, Damascus en Bagdad. De schrijver acht diezelfde onderneming eerder al verantwoordelijk voor het smokkelen van Iraakse olie naar Syrië en - vanuit dat land - van wapens naar Irak.

Op de hoogte

Naar de overtuiging van Najouf zouden de schuilplaatsen naast wapens voor chemische oorlogvoering, ook onderdelen van raketssystemen bevatten, die Saddam Hoessein voor naderend

onheil in veiligheid bracht. Najoef is er wonderlijk genoeg vast van overtuigd dat de VS allang over de genoemde informatie beschikken, maar er om politieke redenen geen ruchtbaarheid aan willen geven.

De Amerikanen zouden namelijk nog niet van het bewind in Damascus af willen, zo redeneert de journalist. Deze opstelling verdedigt met name de op diplomatiek overleg leunende minister van Buitenlandse Zaken, Colin Powell. Die zou om die reden overhoop liggen met zijn Defensiecollega Donald Rumsfeld, die een heel andere koers voor ogen heeft. "Tegen de tijd dat de VS erover uit zijn dat ze zich willen ontdoen van de Syrische heersers, dan willen ze de vondsten natuurlijk plotseling als groot nieuws brengen", zo merkt Najoef laconiek op. "Want dan speelt het verhaal ze namelijk wel in de kaart."

Najoef openbaart graag de geheimen die aan hem zijn toevertrouwd. Na bijna tien jaar in Syrische gevangenschappen te hebben doorgebracht - vanwege de overheid onwelgevallige publicaties - ziet hij niets in het diplomatieke sparen van de kool en de geit, volgens de Powell-methode. "Ik ken het Syrische regime; het lijkt als twee druppels op dat van Saddam Hoessein van weleer. "

Met zijn ontboezemingen wil Najoef vooral verhinderen dat het grote publiek onvolledig over Syrië wordt geïnformeerd. "Als ik lees hoe Franse, Britse, maar ook Nederlandse kranten berichten dat Basjir Assad, na alle wandaden van zijn vader, nu democratie komt brengen in zijn land, lach ik me helemaal dood. Als je ook ziet hoe de Europese Unie zich opstelt tegenover Damascus. Dat is schandelijk! Afgelopen december heeft de EU met Syrië een overeenkomst gesloten over economische en culturele samenwerking. Daarin werd alleen in één klein zinnetje de suggestie aangereikt dat het land misschien iets aan de mensenrechtensituatie zou kunnen doen. En dat terwijl de unie tijdens eerdere onderhandelingen met de mediterrane staten stevige druk uitoefende en het respecteren van de mensenrechten voor het aanhalen van de betrekkingen als een absolute voorwaarde stelde."

Zie verder De Telegraaf

### **Top Syrian Journalist Says Iraqi WMD in Three Sites in Syria**

Posted by Ryan Mauro on **January 8th, 2004**

An award-winning Syrian journalist, Nizar Najoeif, has defected to a Western European country. Upon defecting, he told the Dutch press that his best sources told him that Iraq had hid its WMDs in three sites in Syria:

1) Tunnels under al-Baida, two kilometers from Misyaf Village near Hama in northern Syria. This site is said to have an underground facility and rumored to have been built by the North Koreans to store and produce Scud missiles. Iraqi ballistic missiles are said by Najoeif to be at this location.

2) Tai Snan, north of Salamija, between Hama and Salamiyyah. Najoeif says this is a secret Syrian Air Force base and factory.

3) Sjinsjam located on the Lebanese border south of Homs. Najoeif says this site is under the control of Brigade 661 of the Air Force's Air Patrol.

These are the same three sites identified by Generals Tom Mcinerney and Paul Vallely in their book, "End Game." The individual claiming to be Iraqi General Ali Ibrahim al-Tikriti, said to have defected in 1990, says his sources also identified these three sites. Of course, to be fair, this can be seen either as circular reporting, or as corroboration. The investigation continues.

## **What is Assad hiding in his backyard?**

Satellite photos of secret Syrian site depict at least five guarded installations whose purpose is unclear.

By Avi Scharf      May 30, 2010 | 2:37 AM

The images depict at least five guarded installations whose purpose is unclear. In the center is a new residential complex with at least 40 multistory buildings whose shape and structure are distinct from the architecture in the rest of the town.

A number of Google Earth users said they saw passageways to bunkers leading to installations underneath the mountains surrounding Masyaf.

Other users noted that Syrian journalist and human rights activist Nizar Nayouf told the Dutch newspaper De Telegraaf in 2004 that Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein smuggled his arsenal of chemical and biological weapons into Syria just prior to the United States' invasion of Iraq in 2003.

In the interview, Nayouf claimed that Iraqi weapons of mass destruction were stashed in three separate sites in Syria, including an underground military base beneath the village of AlBaida, one kilometer south of Masyaf. Nayouf was imprisoned by Syrian authorities for 10 years. In 2001, he was granted political asylum in France.

Similar accusations of Iraqi weapons smuggling into Syria were made by then-prime minister Ariel Sharon during an interview with Channel 2 news. Former Israel Defense Forces chief of staff Moshe Ya'alon made similar claims in an interview with the now-defunct New York Sun.

The latest photographs of the area were taken in January, when tensions between Israel and Syria reached a fever pitch. Syrian President Bashar Assad, his foreign minister Walid Moallem and Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak, exchanged warnings over a possible war in the absence of progress toward a peace treaty.

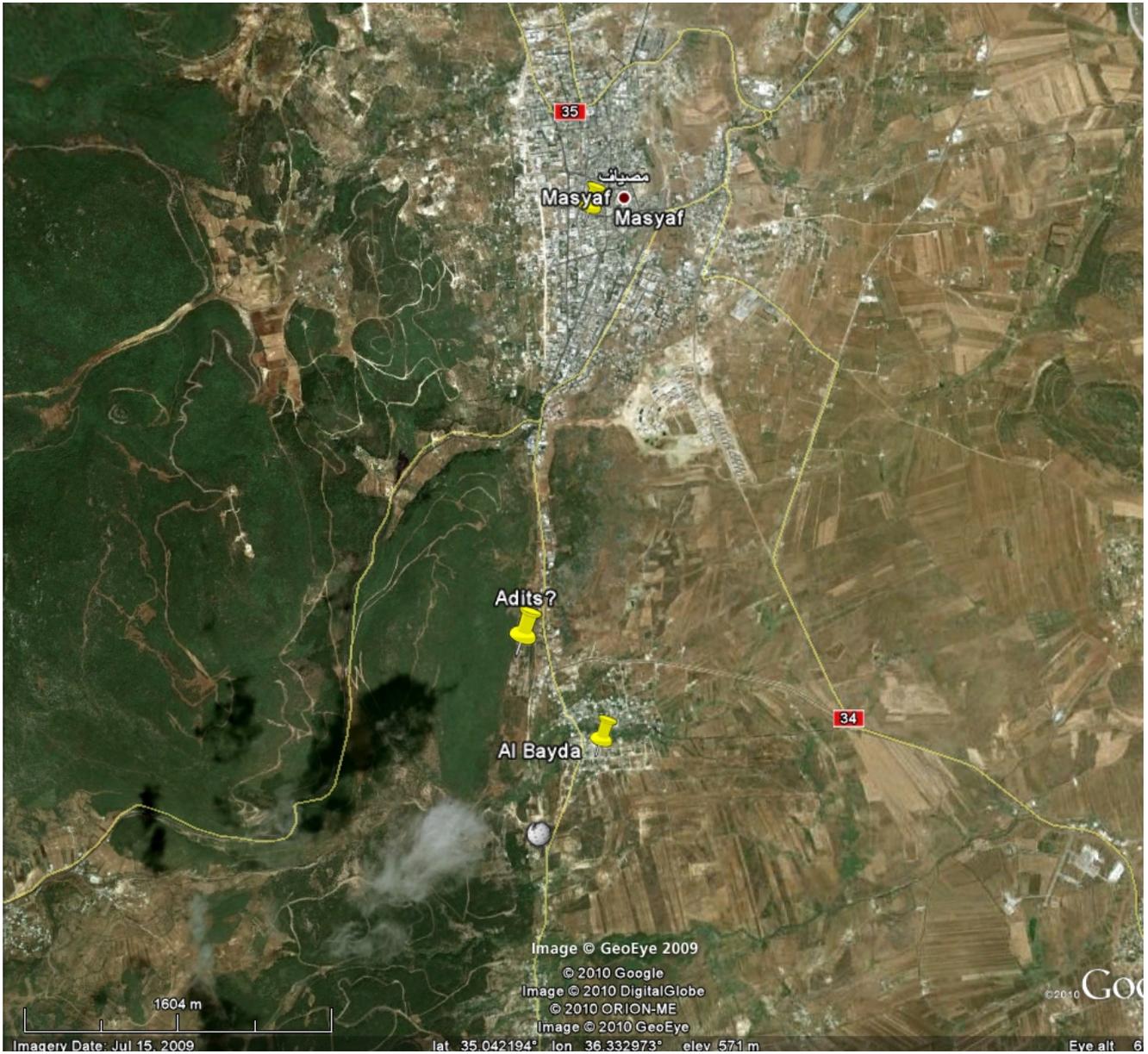
Last month, media reports indicated that the transfer of Scud missiles and advanced M-600 rockets from Syria to Hezbollah led to the latest round of accusations between Jerusalem and Damascus. The news of the weapons delivery prompted the United States to delay the assignment of its ambassador to the diplomatic post in Syria.

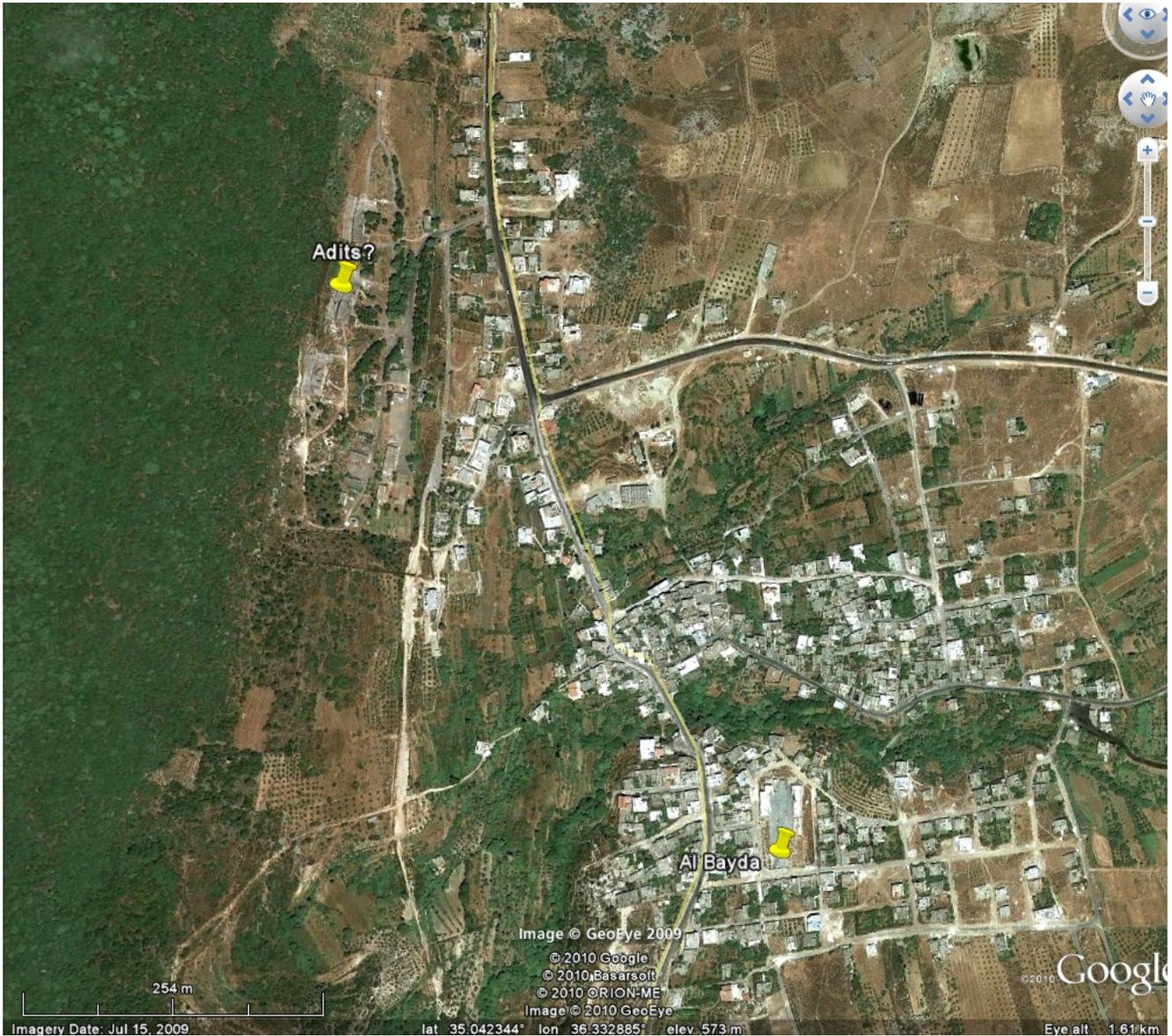
In light of the escalating tensions, the IDF cancelled a comprehensive military enlistment drill so that Syria would not interpret the exercise as a preparation for war.

DigitalGlobe refused to say who requested the satellite photos. Two weeks before the September 2007 destruction of the nuclear reactor in northeast Syria, the company placed an order for numerous photographs of the installation.

Yedioth Ahronoth reported that the photos were ordered by Israel so that it could show them to the press after the bombing. According to the newspaper, Israel sought to demonstrate its military capabilities without revealing its sources.

## **Imagery and Topographic Maps**





Adits?

Al Bayda

254 m

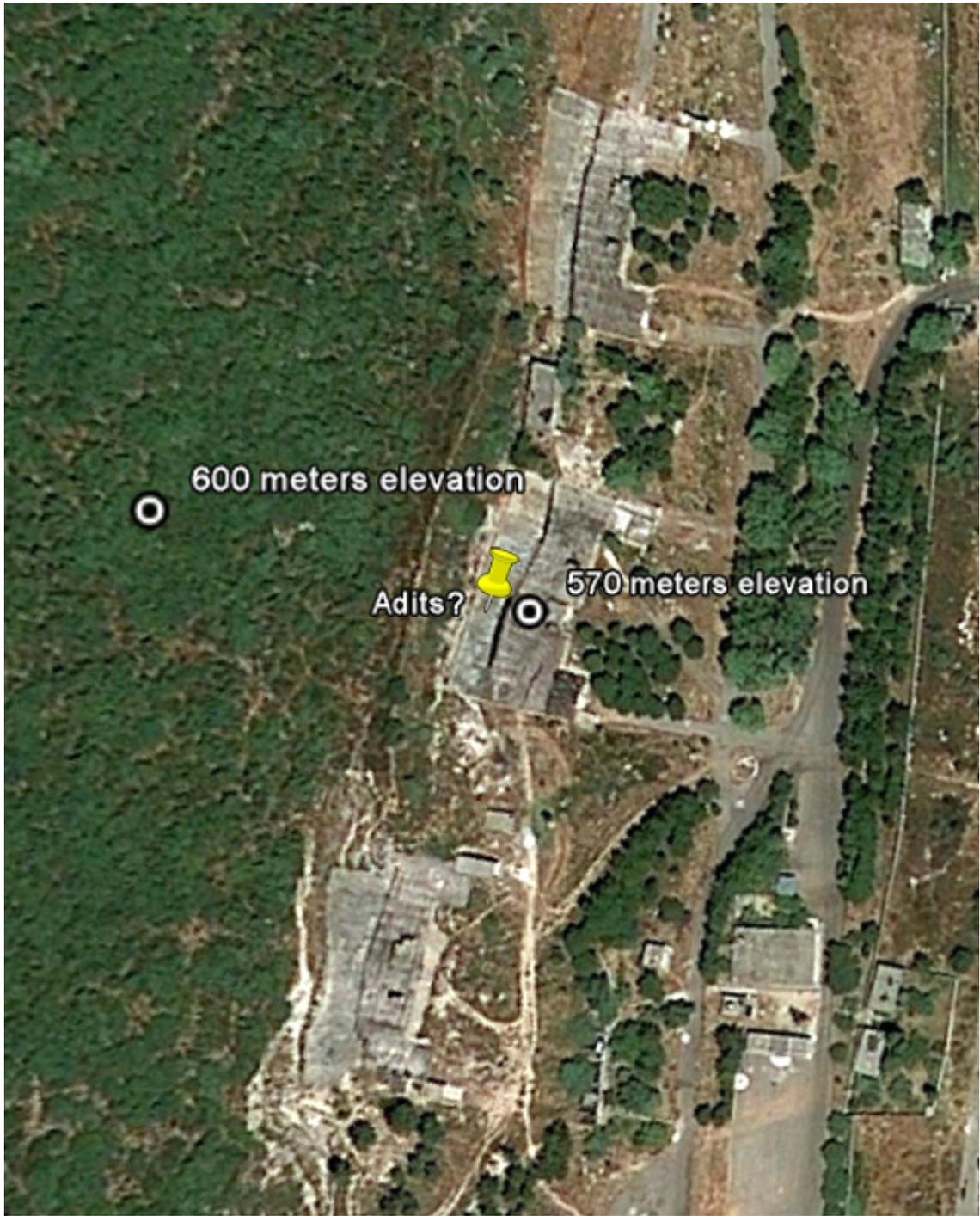
Image © GeoEye 2009  
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Image © 2010 GeoEye

Google

Imagery Date: Jul 15, 2009

lat 35.042344° lon 36.332885° elev 573 m

Eye alt 1.61 km







**Simulated oblique view from over Al Baida looking west showing the possible adits against the foot of the mountain.**

