

Consortiumnews.com

Independent Investigative Journalism Since 1995

[About](#) [Archives](#) [From the Archive Series](#) [In Case You Missed...](#)

[October Surprise Series](#) [Video Interviews](#) [VIPS Memos](#)

Escalating the Anti-Iran Propaganda

August 13, 2015



Exclusive: The Israel Lobby canceled summer vacations for its operatives in a desperate bid to stop the Iran nuclear deal, and U.S. neoconservatives are committing all their “experts” to the fight to keep alive their hopes for war with Iran, such as alleged weapons specialist David Albright, as Jonathan Marshall explains.

By Jonathan Marshall

The United States and five other powers that negotiated the nuclear deal with Iran based it on verification, not on trust. The media need to start applying to the same standard rather than trusting the often questionable claims of their favorite expert on nuclear proliferation, David Albright.

Albright, who is president of the Washington-based Institute for Science and International Security, has long been a loud and oft-quoted critic of Iran’s nuclear intentions. His latest salvo was his widely reported [claim](#) that Iran is engaging in suspicious activity at Parchin, a military [facility](#) in northern Iran, that “could be related” to “sanitization efforts” to defeat verification efforts by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Donate Today

**Fall Fund
Drive Target:
\$35,000**

We have
\$27,075 to go.
Thank you for
your support!

**WINNER OF
THE 2017
MARTHA
GELLHORN
PRIZE FOR
JOURNALIS
M**

**WINNER OF
THE 2015
I.F. STONE
MEDAL
FROM
HARVARD’S**



David Albright, former weapons inspector and founder of the Institute for Science and International Security.

Albright's suspicions were buttressed by two anti-Iran-deal columnists who [reported](#) that the "U.S. intelligence community" was also studying recent photos of the site for possible evidence of clean-up work ahead of planned inspections. His claims were [touted](#) by the Washington Post's right-wing blogger Jennifer Rubin as one more reason to reject the Iran nuclear deal. The Post's neoconservative-leaning opinion page also gave Albright a [column](#) to repeat his assertions, and to ridicule as "mirthful" Iran's denials.

But credible experts with much more serious credentials than Albright have undercut his latest report along with many of his earlier warnings about Iran's nuclear plans. Needless to say, they have received much less media attention.

Albright's Aug. 5 report, a mere one page of text along with three photos, began by describing Parchin as a facility "that is linked to past high explosive work on nuclear weapons." That unqualified phrase should have concerned reporters right from the start.

Yes, there have been unproven claims that Iran tested *non-nuclear* high-explosive devices at Parchin, but they have been [debunked](#) by no less an authority than Robert Kelley, former director of the Department of Energy's Remote Sensing Laboratory and former director of the IAEA's nuclear inspections in Iraq. Moreover, IAEA found [nothing amiss](#) during two unrestricted visits to Parchin in 2005, though Iran has rebuffed its requests for return visits.

Albright's report then analyzed several recent satellite photos, which show

NIEMAN
FOUNDATION
N



BOOKS BY
ROBERT
PARRY

Purchase
Trick or
Treason (and
others)

**TRICK OR
TREASON**

The 1980 October
Surprise Mystery

With a new afterword by the author



by Robert Parry

"One of the most important books on the Iran nuclear crisis... a must-read for anyone who cares about the future of the Middle East." —Daily Telegraph, national security adviser and author of Kissinger's Secret

SEARCH
THIS SITE

Custo	
Search	

CONNECT
WITH US

Sign up for
regular email
updates
First Name:

something happening on the roofs of two buildings, several “possible oil spills,” and a couple of vehicles, possibly including a bulldozer. In contrast, a photo taken before the signing of the agreement showed “little activity” and no vehicles. In addition, two new structures “of unknown purpose” had been erected since May. All of this pointed, in Albright’s fevered imagination, to a “last ditch effort to try to ensure that no incriminating evidence will be found.”

He offered not a shred of evidence to link the mundane visual clues to his dramatic conclusion. One wonders if any reporters actually looked at his photo evidence critically.

Iran’s foreign minister, Mohammad Javad Zarif, [stated](#) in response that the activities at Parchin were related to road construction. Opponents of the deal “have spread these lies before,” he added. “Their goal is to damage the agreement.”

In his Washington Post column, Albright twisted Zarif’s words to claim that he “chose to deny the visible evidence in commercial satellite imagery. Iran’s comments would be mirthful if the topic were not so serious.” Of course, Zarif was disputing not the *imagery* but the tendentious *conclusions* that Albright drew from it.

Albright’s conclusions were also disputed by Kelley, the American nuclear weapons scientist and inspector, who studied a much larger sample of satellite photos over the past five years and found no evidence of any unexplained activity. He also took issue with a subsequent Albright “imagery brief” calling suspicious attention to more than 20 cars parked between Parchin and a nearby dam.

“The ‘parking lot of death’ has been imaged dozens of times and there are clear patterns of passenger cars parked there,” Kelley [told](#) Bloomberg News. “There have been no indicators of a change in Iranian activities of any significance — no earth moving or sanitization whatsoever.”

Other experts also derided Albright’s overheated conclusions. “Parchin is an active site and movement is inevitable,” [said Paul Ingram](#), executive director of the British American Security Information Council. “Attempting an impossible cleanup in full view of satellites and just before Congressional votes would be stretching conspiracy theories beyond breaking point.”

Who should one believe? Expert nuclear inspectors like Kelley, or Albright, who apparently has no advanced training as a nuclear engineer or

Last Name:

Email:

photographic interpreter?

Scott Ritter, the former chief United Nations weapons inspector and IAEA consultant, [unloaded on Albright](#) several years ago, saying he has “a track record of making half-baked analyses derived from questionable sources seem mainstream. He breathes false legitimacy into these factually challenged stories by cloaking himself in a résumé which is disingenuous in the extreme. Eventually, one must begin to question the motives of Albright and ISIS” (the unfortunate acronym of Albright’s organization).

Ritter cited example after example of Albright peddling misinformation: “On each occasion, Albright is fed sensitive information from a third party, and then packages it in a manner that is consumable by the media. The media, engrossed with Albright’s misleading résumé (“former U.N. weapons inspector,” “Doctor,” “physicist” and “nuclear expert”), give Albright a full hearing, during which time the particulars the third-party source wanted made public are broadcast or printed for all the world to see. More often than not, it turns out that the core of the story pushed by Albright is, in fact, wrong.”

Ritter concluded his blast, “It is high time the mainstream media began dealing with David Albright for what he is (a third-rate reporter and analyst), and what he isn’t (a former U.N. weapons inspector, doctor, nuclear physicist or nuclear expert). It is time for David Albright, the accidental inspector, to exit stage right. Issues pertaining to nuclear weapons and their potential proliferation are simply too serious to be handled by amateurs and dilettantes.”

Judging by the latest dust-up, Albright remains a media darling, able to garner headlines whenever he lobs new charges into the political battlefield. The issues at stake in the Iran nuclear deal, to echo Ritter, are simply too serious to be muddled by such irresponsible speculation. It’s high time the media began subjecting Albright, and all quoted experts, to more careful verification of their credentials and claims.

[For more on Albright and other fake experts on Iran’s nuclear program, see Consortiumnews.com’s [“Israel Clears the Bench in Iran Fight.”](#)]

Jonathan Marshall is an independent researcher living in San Anselmo, California. Some of his previous articles for Consortiumnews were [“Risky Blowback from Russian Sanctions”](#); [“Neocons Want Regime Change in Iran”](#); [“Saudi Cash Wins France’s Favor”](#); [“The Saudis’ Hurt Feelings”](#); [“Saudi Arabia’s Nuclear Bluster”](#); [“The US Hand in the Syrian](#)

[Mess”](#); and [“Hidden Origins of Syria’s Civil War.”](#)]



Tags: [David Albright](#) [Iran](#) [Jonathan Marshall](#) [nuclear weapons](#)

[← Mideast Glimmers of Hope](#)

[Obama’s Stupid Blame-Iran Game](#) →

18 comments for “Escalating the Anti-Iran Propaganda”

[Show Comments](#)

Comments are closed.

CATEGORIES

- [Budget](#)
- [Campaign 2012](#)
- [Campaign 2016](#)
- [Consortiumnews.com](#)
- [Constitution](#)
- [Economy](#)
- [Environment](#)
- [Foreign Policy](#)
- [Health Reform](#)
- [Human Rights](#)
- [Intelligence](#)
- [Lost History](#)
- [Media](#)
- [Obama Administration](#)
- [October Surprise](#)
- [Politics](#)
- [Religion](#)
- [Right Wing](#)
- [Secrecy](#)

- [The Bush-43 Administration](#)
- [Trump Administration](#)
- [Uncategorized](#)

OLDER STORIES BY MONTH

August 2015

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					
« Jul				Sep »		

[Comment Policy](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Contact Us](#)