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Question for the Record Submitted to Mary Ann Casey
by Senator Biden
June 25, 1991

2. Purpose of Reactor. Do you agree that this reactor, even if not itself capable of producing nuclear weapons material, is a clear indication of Algeria's desire to obtain nuclear weapons?

A. We have not concluded that the nuclear assistance China is providing Algeria is for nuclear weapons development.

Furthermore, we have no evidence that Algeria seeks to develop a nuclear weapons capability. Algeria has stated that its nuclear program is for purely peaceful purposes.

Both the Algerian and Chinese Governments have stated that the Ain Oussera reactor will have a power rating of 15 megawatts (MW), be fueled by low enriched uranium, and is intended solely for peaceful purposes, such as radio isotope production and basic research. A 15 MW reactor, fueled with low enriched uranium, could not produce a sufficient quantity of plutonium to pose a serious proliferation threat. Algeria has stated its intention to place the nuclear reactor under construction at Ain Oussera under IAEA safeguards and has initiated discussions with the IAEA to this end. We are urging the Algerian Government to conclude a safeguards agreement with the IAEA at the earliest opportunity. We also urge Algeria to adhere to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and reach a full scope safeguards agreement with the IAEA which would include a commitment to safeguard all present and future nuclear facilities.

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2. Purpose of Reactor.

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Question for the Record Submitted to Mary Ann Casey
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June 25, 1991

Algerian Nuclear Reactor

2. Was the British military attache declared persona non grata for trying to take pictures of the reactor? Have any other Western officials been asked to leave Algeria because of the reactor.

A. According to the Algerian press, the British military attache William Cross departed Algeria April 10. According to the Algerian press, he had been found in the vicinity of the Ain Oussera reactor with a camera. The UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office reportedly commented that Cross had done nothing incompatible with his diplomatic status.

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✓ Algerian Nuclear Reactor. Question 2.

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6. Does the U.S. government have any information no matter how slight suggesting that someone other than Algeria may be contributing financially to the construction of the reactor?

A. The United States Government has no indication at present suggesting that any government other than China is assisting Algeria - either financially or technically - in the construction of the reactor at Ain Oussera. Algeria's only other nuclear facility, a 1 megawatt reactor outside Algiers, was built with Argentine assistance.

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Algerian Nuclear Reactor. Question 6.

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