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India Expanding Military Nuclear Site

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Google Earth recently posted satellite imagery from GeoEye taken on March 3, 2010 of the Rare Materials Plant (RMP) in India (see figure 1). This is the site of India's military gas centrifuge uranium enrichment program. In the new imagery, initial excavation and construction of a large building or buildings can be seen. While the construction is in its early stages in this image, the size of the building or buildings to be constructed indicates that these will be large industrial buildings. A DigitalGlobe satellite image from 2005 shows the same area as undeveloped with several adjacent ponds (see figure 2).

Based on procurement data and public advertisements for bidding requests, ISIS concluded in 2006 that India was on the verge of adding at least 3,000 centrifuges to the RMP.¹ If the construction seen in the March 3, 2010 imagery is for a new gas centrifuge hall, India's uranium enrichment capacity at RMP will be greatly expanded.

Further analysis to follow.

¹ India's Gas Centrifuge Enrichment Program: Growing Capacity for Military Purposes, David Albright and Susan Basu, Institute for Science and International Security (ISIS), January 18, 2007: <http://isis-online.org/uploads/isis-reports/documents/indiagrowingcapacity.pdf>

India's Gas Centrifuge Enrichment Program: Growing Capacity for Military Purposes, David Albright and Susan Basu, Institute for Science and International Security (ISIS), December 1, 2006 (Rev.1): <http://isis-online.org/uploads/isis-reports/documents/indiaenrichment.pdf>

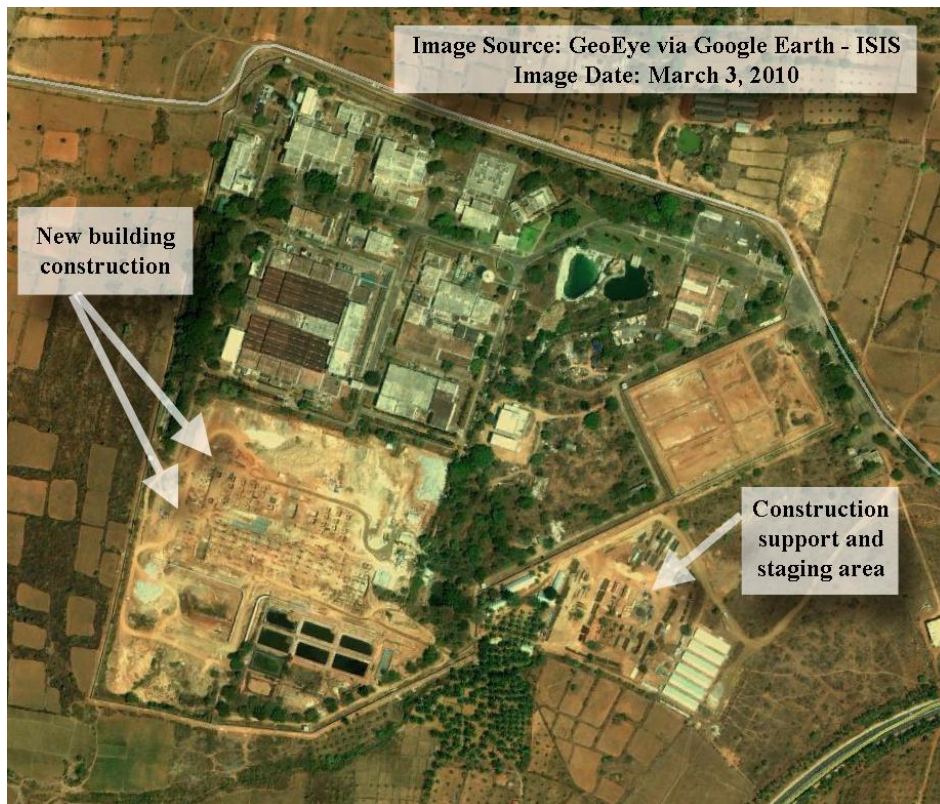


Figure 1. March 3, 2010 GeoEye satellite image of Rare Materials Plant (RMP), India's military gas centrifuge uranium enrichment facility. The construction of one or more large industrial buildings can be seen in this image.



Figure 2. April 28, 2005 DigitalGlobe satellite image of Rare Materials Plant (RMP) in India.