

Renewed Activity at the Parchin Site in Iran

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August 5, 2015

Commercial satellite images dated July 12, 19, and 26, 2015 show renewed activity at a site at the Parchin military complex that is linked to past high explosive work on nuclear weapons. These activities could be related to refurbishment or clean-up prior to any IAEA inspection or the taking of environmental samples.

ISIS acquired and analyzed commercial satellite imagery of the Parchin site in Iran taken before and after the signing of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) between Iran and the P5+1. Imagery from July 26, 2015 shows new signs of activity that are absent from imagery taken before the JCPOA (see figure 1).¹ New activity is taking place on the roof of the two southern buildings (left of figure 1). Several possible oil spills are visible in front of the northern building and the central building (suspected of housing high explosive experiments related to the development of nuclear weapons). Additionally, two vehicles are visible at the site. One is either a large vehicle or a small truck. The other vehicle presents signatures that are consistent with some sort of construction vehicle, such as a bulldozer or a steamroller. One of the two crates or containers visible in previous imagery has been moved, and possibly repositioned adjacent to the large central building at the site.

In two previous images, there is little sign of activity. An Airbus image dated July 19, 2015 shows no sign of renewed activity (see figure 2). A DigitalGlobe satellite image dated July 12, 2015, two days prior to the signing of the JCPOA, also shows little activity (see figure 3). Neither image shows any vehicles. The only noticeable activity between the two images is the repositioning of one of two small crates or containers.

Since the last ISIS assessment, which was in late [May 2015](#), two new structures of unknown purpose have appeared adjacent to the two southern buildings at the site. These two structures were not present in ISIS's previous May 2015 assessment and appeared at the site sometime between May 26 and July 12, 2015. In all three images, two small objects, possibly small containers or crates, are visible at the southern corner of the site, along with two new very small dark and circular-shaped unidentified objects. All the images show the continued presence of debris surrounding the four buildings at the site.

This renewed activity occurring after the signing of the JCPOA raises obvious concerns that Iran is conducting further sanitization efforts to defeat IAEA verification. Because the JCPOA is unlikely to succeed in its closure of the possible military dimensions investigation if the IAEA does not get access to Parchin, Iran is under increasing pressure to allow this access. Although it is difficult to fathom Iran's motivations for its recent actions at Parchin, this renewed activity may be a last ditch effort to try to ensure that no incriminating evidence will be found.

¹ See Josh Rogin and Eli Lake, "Iran Already Sanitizing Nuclear Site, Intel Warns," Bloomberg View, August 5, 2015. <http://www.bloombergvew.com/articles/2015-08-05/iran-already-sanitizing-parchin-nuclear-site-intel-warns>

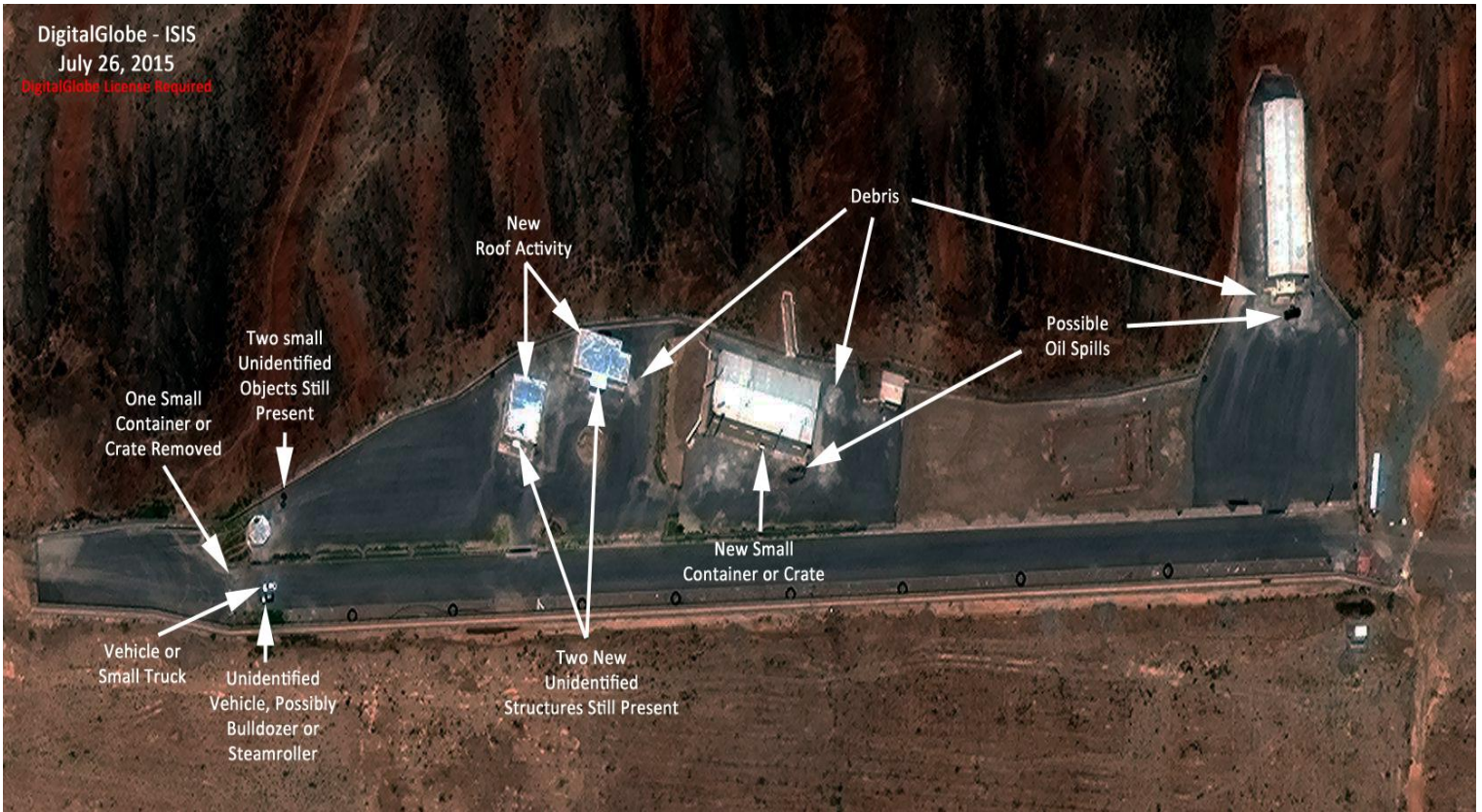


Figure 1. July 26, 2015 DigitalGlobe imagery showing renewed activity at a site at the Parchin military Complex that has been linked to high explosive work related to the development of nuclear weapons.



Figure 2. July 19, 2015 Airbus imagery showing the status of the site at the Parchin military Complex that has been linked to high explosive work related to the development of nuclear weapons.

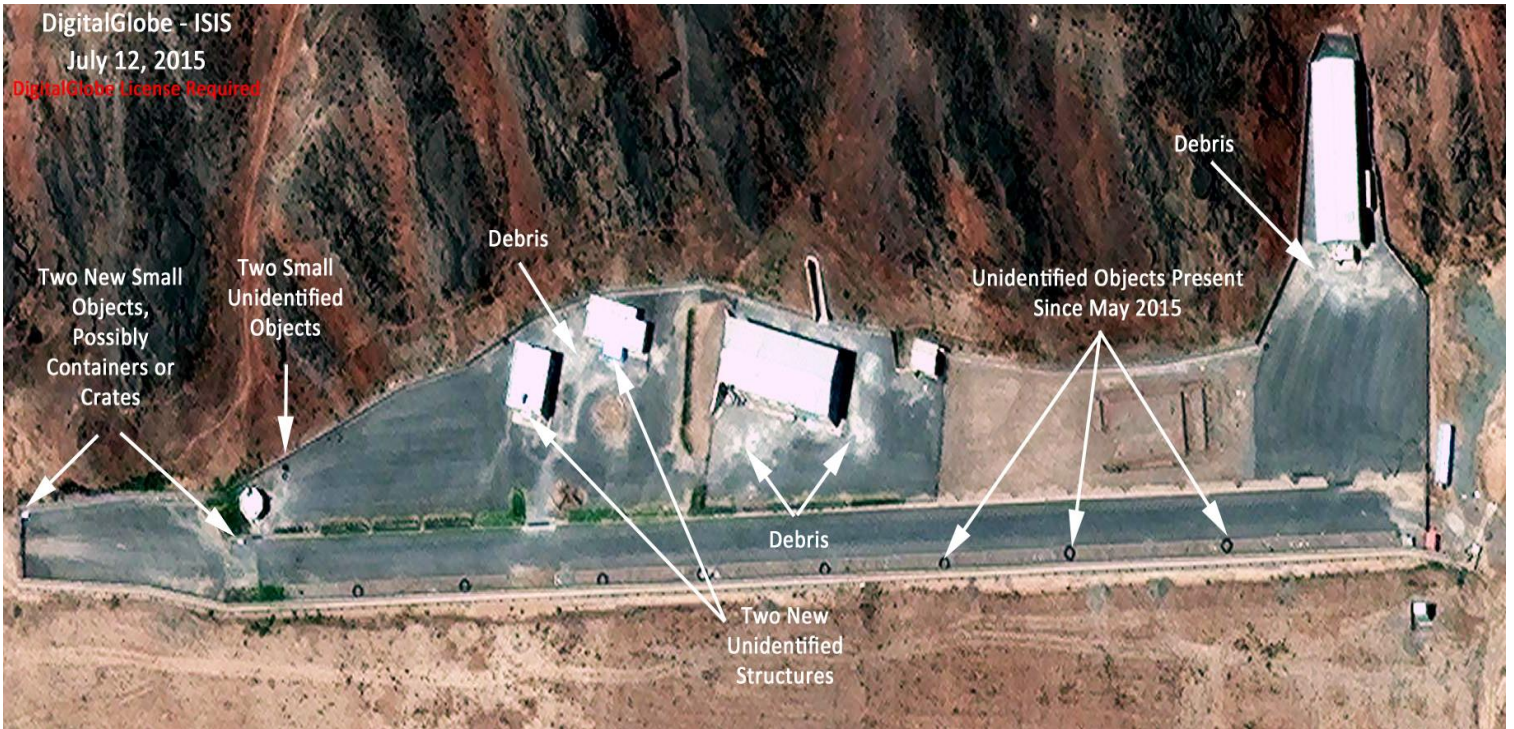


Figure 3. July 12, 2015 Digital Globe imagery showing the status of the site at the Parchin military Complex that has been linked to high explosive work related to the development of nuclear weapons.