

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS, ABC NEWS

(Off Camera) For more on this we're now joined by the man in charge of tracking down any nuclear weapons Iraq might have. The director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Dr. Mohamed el- Baradei. Thank you for joining us, Dr. el-Baradei. How do you think it's going so far?

DIRECTOR GENERAL MOHAMED EL-BARADEI,

INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY

Well, George, I think we are on for a good beginning. I think we are getting cooperation from the Iraqis but we still have a lot of work ahead of us and it's too early to draw a conclusion, but what we have done so far I think all goes well for cooperation, and I hope that Iraq will continue on that path of cooperation. We need immediate access to all facilities and sites but we also need Iraqis to help in being actively cooperating with us in providing evidence to make sure that we are satisfied that we have seen the end of this weapon program in Iraq.

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS

(Off Camera) You talked about that immediate access to any sites but as Mr. Wright just reported from Baghdad, the IAEA actually gave the Iraqis notice before going to a plant. I thought they were supposed to be no notice inspections.

DIRECTOR GENERAL MOHAMED EL-BARADEI

George, there is no notice. I am not at all familiar with this. As far as our team is concerned at the International Atomic Energy Agency, I'm pretty sure we have not given any notice. This could have been by UNMOVIC for a specific reason. I'm not aware of it but I have been in touch today with our people in Iraq, we have been getting immediate access to all sites we have asked to visit, and so far I think the cooperation is going well.

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS

(Off Camera) But why would UNMOVIC give notice before going to a plant? It's been reported by Mr. Wright and others. Wouldn't that give the Iraqis a chance to hide any incriminating evidence?

DIRECTOR GENERAL MOHAMED EL-BARADEI

As I said, I'm not sure whether this is true, but it could be for a specific reason that people at the plant probably need to prepare for an inspection but as I said, I'm not really sure of that. As far as our team is concerned, we have not given any notice and it is clear that neither UNMOVIC or us intend to give any notice. I mean, we have fought hard enough to ensure that all sites should be subject to immediate and unfettered access and that's what we intend to do.

MALE THREE, IRAQI

(Off Camera) Well official spokesmen on the ground have confirmed that the notice has been given but you're saying from now on there should not be any notice of any kind?

DIRECTOR GENERAL MOHAMED EL-BARADEI

I'm saying that I do not know about why notice was given on that specific plant and if it were given by UNMOVIC, there must be a good reason for giving that notice. I'm not, clearly not to give the Iraqis time to hide things, it's probably needed for some other

technical reason, but I would suggest that you should check that with UNMOVIC. They might have a very good reason for it.

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS

(Off Camera) Okay, so let me go on to another matter. The inspectors also visited the al Farat(PH) plant. Several weeks ago, the White House circulated satellite photos of al Farat, they said they showed new construction at the plant. Did your inspectors find any evidence of new construction at al Farat?

DIRECTOR GENERAL MOHAMED EL-BARADEI

Yes, I think they have seen new construction but I think the new construction is designed for reasons other than weapon purposes. I think our people have been satisfied so far that they haven't seen any indication at al Farat that the plant is being used for weapon purposes.

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS

(Off Camera) Have your people seen any indication of any kind anywhere of any weapons development?

DIRECTOR GENERAL MOHAMED EL-BARADEI

George, I think it's too early but I can say no, until that time, but I would hate to jump to any conclusion. We still have a lot of work ahead of us. We still have to build capacity in Iraq. We still have to use different parts of our inspection system, environment assembling, aerial surveillance, no notice in inspection, so it's too early to come to conclusion, but the short answer to your question, no, we have not yet seen any indication of a weapon program going on.

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS

(Off Camera) British intelligence is reported to have told Prime Minister Tony Blair that Iraqis are systematically now hiding possibly incriminating documents in their homes. Have the British shared that intelligence with you?

DIRECTOR GENERAL MOHAMED EL-BARADEI

Well, we are getting intelligence from the British and other intelligence agencies. We haven't yet gotten anything on the specifics, hiding documents at home. We have been saying that anybody who have intelligence information of help should be, should be coming forward to us. We are absolutely going to follow through with any intelligence information. But we have also told the Iraqis, you know, if you really want to come clean, if you want us to be able to provide credible assurances to the Security Council, you need to cooperate with us actively by coming forward with evidence, documents and otherwise that would convince us that your program, past program have come to a complete halt and that we have seen all aspects of your past clandestine programs.

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS

(Off Camera) But the Iraqis haven't done that yet, have they?

DIRECTOR GENERAL MOHAMED EL-BARADEI

No, they haven't. I mean, I think they are now preparing their 8th of December declaration, this is the declaration where they supposed to come with a comprehensive account of all their past weapon programs, their development and their claim that nothing is left in Iraq. I hope that that declaration will be comprehensive, accurate and complete. However, once we get that declaration, we are going to do a lot of inspection work to check the veracity of that

