



Written by [Steven J. DuBord](#) on June 4, 2009

U.S. Nuclear Site List Leaked

According to President Obama's May 5 transmittal letter to Congress, his administration considers this list to be "Sensitive but Unclassified." The Federation of American Scientists noted that "sensitive or not, the draft declaration was promptly published by the Government Printing Office" on June 1 at the office's website, ensuring a far wider distribution of the unedited list than was intended. *The New York Times* [reported on June 2](#) that its own inquiries about the document on that day prompted the printing office to remove the 267-page PDF that same evening.



The reason why the Government Printing Office published the document this way remains a mystery. The document's cover declares: "Message and accompanying papers referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and ordered to be printed." Yet the *Times* quotes the committee's spokeswoman, Lynne Weil, as saying the committee had "neither published it nor had control over its publication." A spokesman for the printing office, Gary Somerset, reportedly said the document was produced and published "under normal operating procedures," but it had now been removed pending further review.

No military data about nuclear weapons is contained in the list, but America's civilian nuclear complex is described in some detail. Site locations, site activities, and, in some cases, site maps are included. The *Guardian* [stated on June 3](#) that one of the most serious examples is "a map showing the exact location of a storage site for highly enriched weapons grade uranium at the heavily guarded Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Tennessee."

Some analysts, such as David Albright, a former UN nuclear inspector and president of the Institute for Science and International Security, downplayed the danger while still seeing a problem. "It is probably not that dangerous, but it is a violation of the law," the *Washington Post* [quoted him as saying](#). "You don't want this information out there, any more than you would want a thief to know the location of a vault in your house."

Other analysts, including the Federation of American Scientist's Aftergood, said that the document poses no risk to national security. On June 3, *USA Today* [gave Aftergood's opinion](#): "I regret that some people are painting it as a roadmap for terrorists, because that's not what it is." He said the document does not disclose any "sensitive nuclear technologies" or "facility security procedures," and he thinks "it poses no security threat whatsoever." As of this writing, the Federation website was still providing a download link for the PDF.

The real crux of the issue is why the Obama administration compiled this exposé in the first place. The administration was bowing to the UN's [International Atomic Energy Agency](#) by complying with the nuclear [Non-Proliferation Treaty](#). The IAEA wants to conduct pervasive inspections of treaty members, ostensibly for the purpose of preventing the spread of nuclear weapons. President Obama is complying by essentially telling them where to look.

Unfortunately, the furor over being temporarily able to download the PDF from a government website distracts from the greater concern over revealing this information to the UN. UN agencies are staffed by people with national affiliations and political ties. [The IAEA website states](#) that "the IAEA Secretariat is made up of a team of 2,200 multi-disciplinary professional and support staff from more than 90 countries." One would think it highly likely that some of these staff members come from countries that harbor ill-will toward the United States, yet the president is laying bare the details of our nuclear complex and just trusting that this information won't be misused.

Also, acquiescing to the UN implies that the world body as a collective has the right to govern the internal affairs of its members. It does not. In fact, the UN has proven itself unworthy of such power. It allows nations that regularly violate human rights to sit on its [Human Rights Council](#). It permits Communist China — currently preoccupied with cracking down on dissent in anticipation of the



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Tiananmen Square anniversary — to have a permanent place on its [Security Council](#).

This hypocritical collective has no right to our sensitive nuclear data and our president has no right to give it.



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