



Construction Continues at Pakistan's Khushab Site

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Construction activity in the southwest corner of Pakistan's Khushab nuclear site is progressing. However, it is still too early to make a final judgment on the nature of the construction. Signatures visible through recent commercial satellite imagery do not permit a definitive assessment of the site's purpose. ISIS will continue to monitor this construction.

Construction activity is progressing in the southwest corner of Pakistan's Khushab nuclear site, south of reactors 2, 3, and 4. As figure 1 shows, the new building at the site appears externally complete and very similar to a building northeast of reactor 3 (see comparison in figure 2). Although the purpose of this building remains unknown, the fact that the adjacent foundations present signatures consistent with a construction staging area suggest that it could serve as a storage building for construction purposes. Figure 3 shows an overview of the entire site.

The most recent imagery dated July 25, 2015 shows one additional noteworthy signature (see figure 1). About 300 meters east of this new building/construction staging area are two clearings that could be for new buildings. One area seems to have been cleared in preparation for the installation of new foundations. The other area already shows new foundations (see figure 1). The ultimate purpose of all this construction is unknown.

Nearby is a major construction staging area that includes a helicopter pad.

ISIS first [highlighted](#) this new construction activity in the southwestern section of the Khushab site in early 2015. A second [assessment](#) was released in May 2015 in which satellite imagery showed construction progression. None of the features visible in the imagery allows a determination on the purpose of this construction. However, this new site has a security perimeter around it, as do the four reactors.

The multi-year expansion of the Khushab site is related to Pakistan's on-going effort to produce relatively large amounts of weapons-grade plutonium for more sophisticated nuclear weapons. According to a former senior Pakistani official, the purpose of the plutonium produced in the reactors at Khushab is to build smaller, shorter range nuclear weapons, including tactical nuclear-tipped missiles.

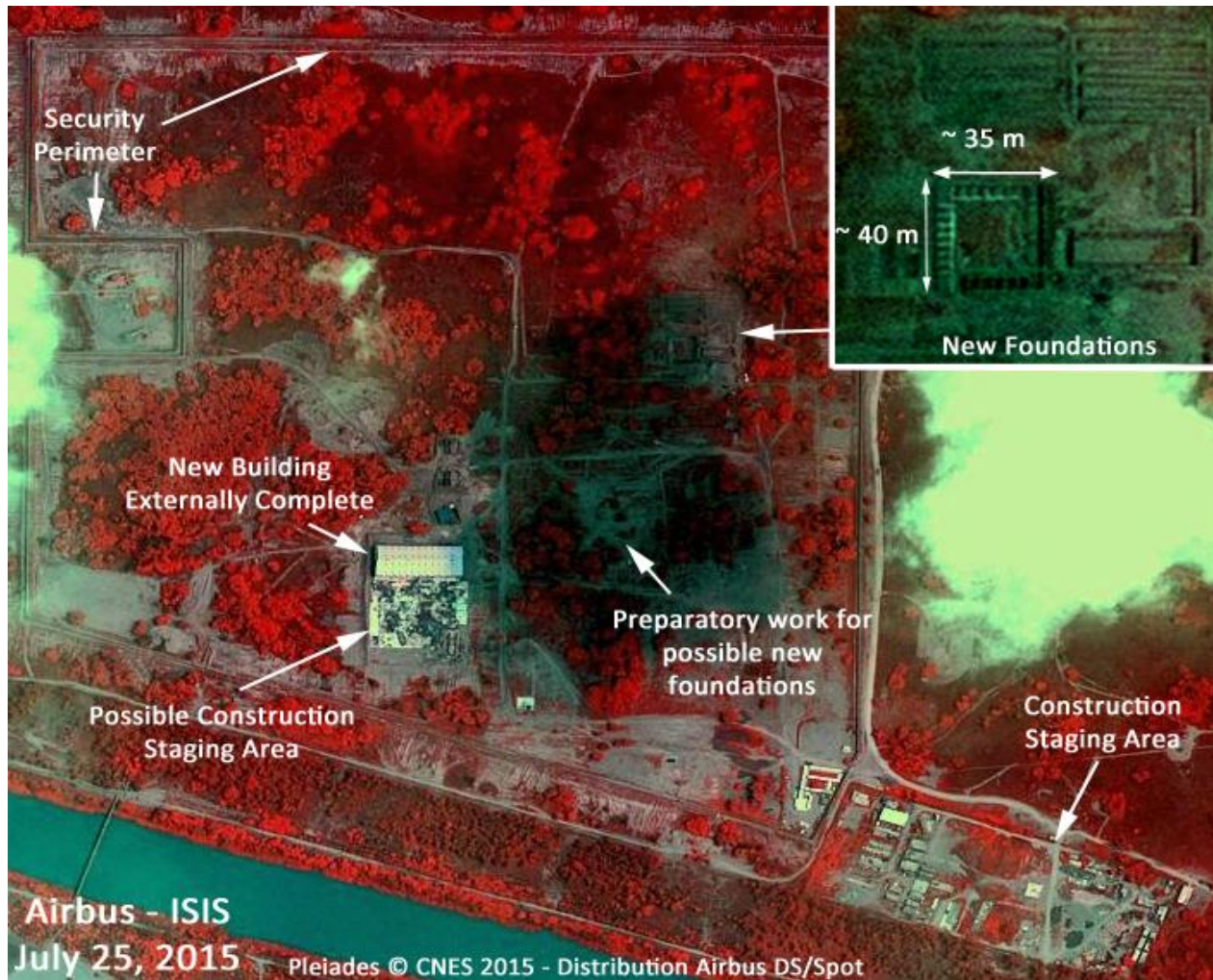


Figure 1. Airbus imagery dated July 25, 2015, showing construction activity in the southwest section of the Khushab nuclear site in Pakistan. This is a color infrared image in which healthy vegetation appears red.

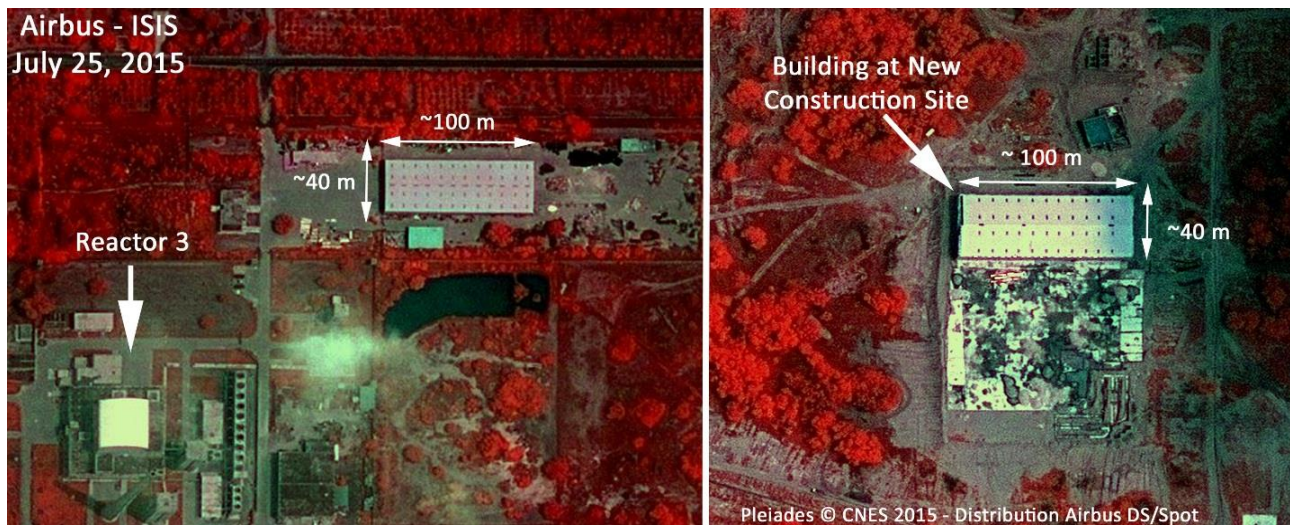


Figure 2. Airbus imagery dated July 25, 2015, comparing the new building constructed at Khushab nuclear site to an existing building close to reactor 3. This is a color infrared image in which healthy vegetation appears red.

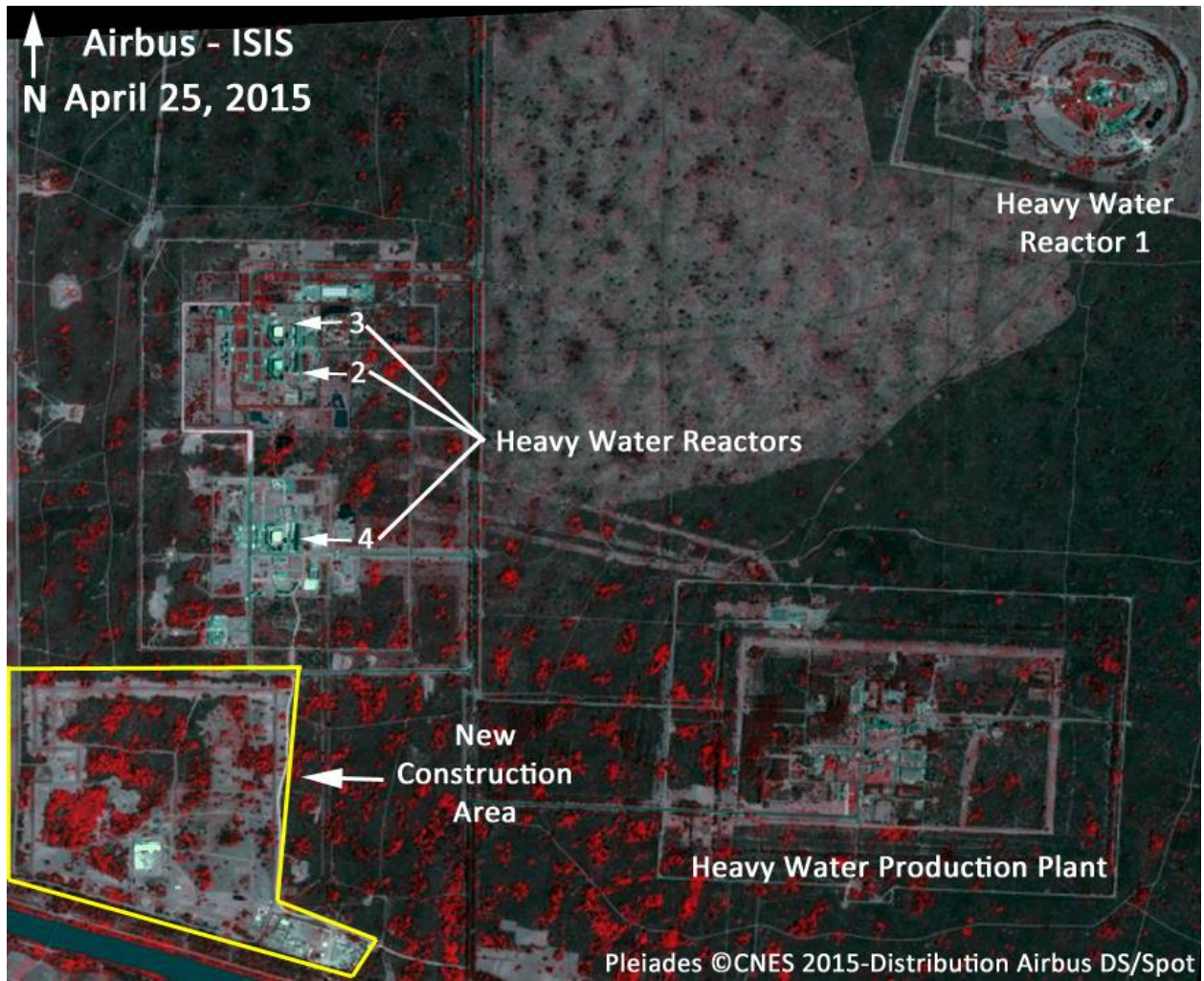


Figure 3. Airbus imagery dated April 25, 2015, showing the Khushab nuclear site in Pakistan. This is a color infrared image in which healthy vegetation appears red.