

**"Second Attack on South African Nuke Plant",
Noah Shachtman,
Wired, November 13, 2007**

"On the same night last week that four robbers shot an emergency officer at Pelindaba" – South Africa's most important atomic facility – "another attempt was made to bypass the nuclear site's security," according to *The Sowetan*.

The site's outer security perimeter was breached in both incidents, SA Nuclear Energy Corporation (NECSA) chief executive Rob Adam disclosed today...

Adam said that the two attempts appeared to have been "coordinated" but there was no evidence to verify this as yet.

It was not clear what the motive for the breaches was, and all possibilities were being investigated, he said...

"Modus operandi implied prior knowledge of electronic security systems. I'm not saying it is an inside job. I'm saying whoever did this, knows these systems very, very well."

The Times of South Africa calls the attacks "military-style" – and a says the aim was "seizing the institution's computers."

[Note: It was not long ago — in 1990 to be precise — that this institution was involved in the South Africa's nuclear weapons production. The assumption must be that there would be no computer records of this process on the premises.]

But there may well be invaluable research and data stored at the facility on the process of producing weapons-grade nuclear material at Pelindaba.

It is highly unlikely that the "military-style" gang which attacked the facility was merely after the computers for their paltry resale value. They must have been seeking whatever intelligence they knew to be on these computers.

That they were able to defeat the facilities security system and enter its main emergency control room suggests that they were well-informed about the layout of the facility and about how to gain access to the information they sought to steal.

Such information, aside from being the valuable intellectual property of South Africa—the first and only nation in the world to build and then destroy nuclear weapons—could be put to diabolical uses in an era of global terrorism.

"It is apparently a busy week in South Africa for nuclear incidents," Ohadi Langis observes.

[Note: According to a report by a Pretoria TV station, a nuclear smuggling case is ongoing. It isn't known whether the case is related to the gunmen's attack on Pelindaba.]

A woman has appeared in Cape Town Magistrate's Court Nov 8th on charges of helping to smuggle parts used in manufacturing nuclear weapons from the United States to South Africa. Marisa Sketo, 46, allegedly also helped to export the nuclear weapon parts illegally from South Africa to Pakistan. She is facing charges under the Weapons of Mass Destruction Act. The trial has been rescheduled for January 23, according to a court official.

An unnamed US source reportedly told the TV station the parts she allegedly helped to smuggle to Pakistan were "rapid high-voltage electric switches". A nuclear weapons expert, who did not want to be named, said these switches "were used in nuclear weapons." Most likely he is referring to Krytron detonation switches or similar switches.

Source: <https://www.wired.com/2007/11/second-attack-o>