

## Egyptian opposition leader seeks nuclear reactors

*At least he is making the right point - 6x2000 MW reactors would do it.*

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Imprisoned Egyptian opposition leader Ayman Nour asked U.S. Secretary of State

Condoleezza Rice on Wednesday to look into whether Egypt can benefit from a U.S. offer to help developing countries develop nuclear energy.

Hosni Mubarak's main rival in presidential elections last year, is serving a five-year sentence for forgery but says the charges were fabricated to keep him out of politics.

One of his deputies in the liberal Ghad (Tomorrow) Party, Hesham Kassem, is seeing Rice on Wednesday when she meets a group of prominent Egyptian liberals and intellectuals.

At a news conference with Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit on Tuesday, Rice described Nour's imprisonment as a setback and a disappointment. Aboul Gheit said Nour's case had gone through due legal process.

But in his letter to Rice, released on Wednesday in the form of a statement by the Ghad Party, Nour surprisingly did not mention his own case or complain at the government's treatment of his party.

Instead, he said Egypt needed six 2,000 megawatt nuclear reactors to produce half its electricity needs and replace natural gas, which now produces much of Egypt's electricity.

President George W. Bush offered last week to provide developing countries with small-scale reactors that are secure and cost-effective, provided they forego activities which could lead to nuclear weapons.

Nour faulted the Egyptian government for failing to ask about Bush's offer before it supported the United States against

Analysts said Nour raised the nuclear issue to underline his concern with issues other than his treatment by the government.