

## Inspectors or spies: Is there a difference?

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Iraqi government claims that United Nations weapons inspectors are really spies for the US government have been brushed off by the Clinton administration, the UN and the American media. The general approach has been to treat such charges as so absurd that they are not worth commenting on.

But an article in Monday's *Washington Post* effectively confirms the Iraqi allegations. The article notes that UNSCOM itself had neither the manpower nor the financing to carry out widespread inspections in a country of 23 million people. The vast majority of the 160 technical experts working for UNSCOM in New York City and Baghdad were supplied by governments which participated in the Gulf War against Iraq. Most of these experts are still on the payroll of their respective governments.

Although these individuals sign statements of loyalty to the UN, swearing not to divulge information to the governments which pay their salaries, "it is no secret that some of these experts report their findings not only to the commission but to their own governments as well," the newspaper reported.

"Sensitive information about Iraq does flow in and out of the commission's offices on the 30th and 31st floors of the United Nations tower in New York," said the *Post* account, not only through individual agents, but as part of the official workings of UNSCOM, which relies on "unpublicized assistance" from agencies like the US Central Intelligence Agency and National Security Agency.

American U-2 planes take detailed photographs of Iraqi sites for UNSCOM, with the film developed at NSA laboratories which routinely copy the information for American use. In addition, UNSCOM has turned over dozens of Russian-made engines, gyroscopes and other parts of ballistic missiles for analysis by the CIA, because "no other country knew as much about these missiles."



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