



When White House national security advisor Susan Rice's security detail cleared her Jerusalem hotel suite for bugs and intruders Tuesday night, they might've had in mind a surprise visitor to Vice President Al Gore's room 16 years ago this week: a spy in an air duct.

According to a senior former U.S. intelligence operative, a Secret Service agent who was enjoying a moment of solitude in Gore's bathroom before the Veep arrived heard a metallic scraping sound. "The Secret Service had secured [Gore's] room in advance and they all left except for one agent, who decided to take a long, slow time on the pot," the operative recalled for Newsweek. "So the room was all quiet, he was just meditating on his toes, and he hears a noise in the vent. And he sees the vent clips being moved from the inside. And then he sees a guy starting to exit the vent into the room."

Did the agent scramble for his gun? No, the former operative said with a chuckle. "He kind of coughed and the guy went back into the vents."

To some, the incident stands as an apt metaphor for the behind-closed-doors relations between Israel and America, "frenemies" even in the best of times. The brazen air-duct caper "crossed the line" of acceptable behavior between friendly intelligence services – but because it was done by Israel, it was quickly hushed up by U.S. officials.

Despite strident denials this week by Israeli officials, Israel has been caught carrying out aggressive espionage operations against American targets for decades, according to U.S. intelligence officials and congressional sources. And they still do it. They just don't get arrested very often.

More...