

week or two in another country, perhaps where it is summer instead of winter. A complete change of climate. A complete change of food. Probably intestinal problems before you can finally board that last flight back to Vienna and family.

Of course the inspection work is not quite over. On return to the office there is a debriefing to go through with the Section Head and other inspectors. What went right? What went wrong? Were the decisions taken on-site the best or would some other action have been more effective?

Then there is the routine of filling in the numerous reports. The Agency has complete records of all the transactions between all the facilities under its jurisdiction. None of these facilities operates in isolation. Computers compare your reported results with all of its stored information to verify that it all adds up. If not, then you have a follow-up job to do before this inspection is over. It makes no difference to the computer whether the error is the operator's or yours, you still have to track it down, and explain why you didn't catch it in the field, where it should have been resolved in the first place. This is not something any inspector looks forward to but the result is important, not individual feelings. In such a system a lie has to be consistent throughout the whole network of facilities or it will come to light. This is the key to the effectiveness of safeguards that entirely cover the nuclear programs of the member countries.

The reward comes each year in September at the general conference of the IAEA's member countries when the Director General can announce that the inspection system has once again been able to assure the world that no nuclear material under safeguards has been diverted to weapons use.