

Editorials Question U.S. Evidence of Weapons of Mass Destruction

Arab English-language newspaper editorials are asking the whereabouts of Iraq's supposed weapons of mass destruction.

"Having chosen them as the key reason for war, Washington has to prove its case," said [Arab News](#), Saudi Arab's English-language daily. "If it does not, the world will forever believe that it paved the road with lies."

Asserting that the Bush administration's credibility is at stake, the Saudi editorial said: "The search for weapons of mass destruction has to be in the hands of a team demonstrably independent of Washington. That means the IAEA [International Atomic Energy Agency] and the U.N. inspectors led by Hans Blix. There is no one else that has the credibility, the authority and the skills."

Sunday's [Jordan Times](#) noted, "The U.N. weapons inspectors never found a trace of any weapons of mass destruction in Iraq and now after a month of U.S. occupation, no proof has been found to incriminate Iraq on that count."

[Al-Ahram Weekly](#), an Egyptian publication, asked, "Where ... are the caches of lethal germs, poison gas and plans for nuclear weapons that were presented as the pretext for the aggression against Iraq?"

Non-Arab newspapers also addressed the Bush administration's persistent argument for the invasion of Iraq based on allegation that Saddam Hussein had millions of tons of biological, chemical and nuclear weapons.

The [Sydney Morning Herald](#) said: "The question whether Saddam Hussein's regime had weapons of mass destruction is central to America's justification for making war. The question is one that should be answered by a competent, credible and independent body, one that answers to no national government."

The U.N. is the best body for such an independent verification, said the Australian editorial.

Wednesday's [New York Times](#) made a similar case.

"The central question of whether Iraq had active unconventional weapons programs still remains. None have yet been found by American or British troops," said the *Times*. "This is no small matter, given Washington's emphasis on Iraq's arms as the primary reason for going to war."

The editorial said, "The hunt for these weapons would be aided by the presence of independent experts, and the credibility of any discoveries would be much enhanced if they were confirmed by the U.N."

Cleveland's [Plain Dealer](#) said, "The best way to counter the rhetoric of those who accuse American of being an occupying force is to move as quickly and as transparently as possible to document what became of Iraq's weapons programs, which means letting the U.N. inspectors resume their work."

The [Chicago Tribune](#) said, "Finding those weapons is quickly becoming a litmus test for some on whether the war was justified, as well as a measure of America's intelligence capabilities."

U.N. inspectors could offer "crucial help in interviewing Iraq scientists and military leaders," as well as help to defuse conspiracy theories that found-weapons were planted by U.S. forces, said the Chicago editorial.