



CYBERNOTES

State IG Finds BBG Head Violated Rules

On Aug. 29, the State Department Inspector General's office sent the results of its yearlong investigation of the Broadcasting Board of Governors Chairman, Kenneth Tomlinson, to Congress. The report, covered in major newspapers (www.washingtonpost.com/wpdyn/content/article/2006/08/29/AR2006082901492.html), states that Tomlinson improperly used his office and violated rules as head of the agency that oversees the Voice of America and other government broadcasting operations. In particular, he put a friend on the payroll and ran a "horse-racing operation" with government resources.

The State Department also sent the report to the Department of Justice, which has declined to bring criminal charges against Tomlinson. An allegation involving a contractor is, however, pending with the DOJ.

Last November, the BBG governor resigned his position as chairman of the Corporation for Public Broad-

casting when the CPB's inspector general found that he had employed contractors without documentation, tried to tamper with CPB's programming and appeared to show political favoritism in selecting CPB's president while he was chairman.

Diplomats Urge Dialogue with Syria and Iran

In an Aug. 15 statement, members of the American Academy of Diplomacy urged the Bush administration to widen the dialogue on the Lebanese crisis to include Syria and Iran (www.commongroundcommonsense.org/forums/lofiversion/index.php/t61149.htm).

In releasing the statement, Academy Chairman Thomas R. Pickering acknowledged the essential contribution made by the U.S. armed forces, as well as the fact that the country's diplomats have proved their mettle in the "new and dangerous world afflicted by terrorism." Pickering added: "We need have no fear that talking with other governments of whatever stripe somehow demonstrates weak-

ness. Discussion is not defeat; conversation is not concession. Backed up by our strong military position, these are the essential first steps of intelligent diplomatic dialogue designed to promote the vital national interests of the U.S."

AAD supports the efforts led by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to end the fighting in Lebanon and stop attacks on Israel, and applauds U.N. Security Council Resolution 1701. However, it specifies that "discussions must now continue, both to ensure that it is faithfully implemented by all parties and to address the underlying problems of the region."

In concluding, the Academy states: "We urge the administration to intensify and broaden diplomatic efforts to include influential state stakeholders Syria and Iran in a fully coordinated approach to the region and its interrelated problems which, if successful, could have important beneficial effects on all the areas of conflict."

In an interview in the July edition of *The Washington Diplomat* (www.washingtondiplomat.org), Academy President Brandon Grove underlined the unique perspective and authority of the organization, whose members have held positions of major responsibility in formulating and implementing U.S. foreign policy. "We are a very different and distinct organization in Washington with possibilities that are unique," he said. "Our greatest asset is our membership, which is an amazing group of people. This is probably the most

50 Years Ago...

Diplomacy exists to serve better understanding among peoples. Yet probably one-half of the members of the U.S. Foreign Service are unable to speak any language but English to any useful degree. This is the shocking situation uncovered by a recent departmental survey of language skills in the Foreign Service.



— Editorial: "A Tongue-Tied Foreign Service?", *FSJ*, October 1956.



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distinguished group of American diplomats brought together since the days of the Founding Fathers.”

Grove, a retired FSO and former ambassador who took over from Ambassador Bruce Laingen as president in April, intends to lead a “fundamental reassessment” of the Academy’s mission to determine the best way it can enhance American diplomacy to meet the demands of a volatile and complicated world.

“We are at a crossroads in history. The world is changing quickly around us,” Grove said. “There are new things to understand about diplomacy itself. We have got to move forward and share that understanding. The world is not ordered in any discernible way today. The U.S.’s purposes are not as clearly and consistently defined as they should be. The Academy is looking for ways to help American diplomacy in a changed environment.”

A No-Nonsense Look at State’s Staffing Crisis

On Aug. 4, the Government Accountability Office delivered a 65-page report on the State Department’s staffing and foreign language shortfalls to the chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations (www.goa.gov). GAO’s aim was to evaluate State’s progress in addressing these problems since the 2002 implementation of the Diplomatic Readiness Initiative. With characteristic thoroughness, the GAO sets forth the scope of the crisis in black and white.

The report, GAO-06-894, states repeatedly that the DRI has been overtaken by demands for staffing and expertise from Iraq and Afghanistan. The initiative enabled State to hire more than 1,000 employees above attrition, but “most of this increase was absorbed by the demand for personnel in Iraq and Afghanistan, and thus the desired crises and training reserve was not achieved.” And: “Although the DRI brought in a large number of new FSOs, it made minimal impact in addressing the staffing gaps at hardship posts, largely because of new staffing demands in Iraq and Afghanistan.”

Elsewhere, it notes: “DRI’s goals became quickly outdated as new pressures resulted from staffing demands for Iraq and Afghanistan. For example, the department has currently levied what it calls an ‘Iraq tax’ on all its bureaus in order to support its operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.” In the past two years, the Iraq tax has claimed a total of 280 mid-level generalist and specialist positions, and another such tax is expected for 2007.

The most severe staffing gaps continue to be at the mid-level, concentrated in the consular and public diplomacy cones. Citing a recent survey of FS spouses and members of household, the report identifies family issues and the lack of locality pay as the greatest obstacles to meeting the requirement for mid-level officers at hardship posts.

The staffing shortfall directly affects the ability to implement poli-

cy in many areas. For instance, due to staffing shortages in consular sections around the world, there are fewer officers to implement the new interview requirements and screening procedures for visas, resulting in extensive wait times for applicants for visa interviews at consular posts overseas. Other functions, such as regional security, are also compromised.

On the issue of increasing language capabilities, despite efforts by State, progress has been halting. As of October 2005, nearly 30 percent of language-designated positions were held by individuals who did not meet the requirements. In the Middle East this proportion is at 37 percent. Moreover, GAO found that State has not yet put in place a system for evaluating the effectiveness of its initiatives.

GAO made five broad recommendations to solve these problems including using directed assignments as necessary to fill vital positions at critical-needs posts; systematically evaluating the effectiveness of the incentive programs for hardship post assignments, and adjusting the incentives on that basis; altering the assignment system to enhance language capability; systematically evaluating incentive programs for language-proficiency improvement; and, conducting a risk assessment of critical-language needs in regions and countries of strategic importance, including requirements for staff and training, and targeting limited resources accordingly.

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— Former President
William J. Clinton, Aug. 16,
www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice

Canadian FSOs Face Budget Constraints, Changing Priorities

Canada has the lowest proportion of diplomats posted abroad of any G-8 country — about 25 percent — according to a briefing report for Foreign Affairs Minister Peter MacKay that was brought to light in the Aug. 23 issue of Canada's foreign policy newsweekly, *Embassy* (www.embassymag.ca/html/index.php?display=story&full_path=/2006/august/23/foreignservices/).

A decade of "financial restraint" is cited as the reason why more than half of Canada's Foreign Service officers never leave the Department of Foreign Affairs on Sussex Drive in Ottawa. According to the briefing, each additional diplomat posted abroad costs up to \$300,000 per year. Further, many of the country's missions need millions of dollars worth of security upgrades, and programs, public diplomacy and advocacy have been pushed aside.

According to *Embassy* correspondent Lee Berthiaume, the problem was highlighted in July when the gov-

ernment had to scramble to get diplomats and staff members to Lebanon, Cyprus and Turkey to help evacuate thousands of Canadian and dual-national citizens who were trying to flee the region.

From 1995 to 2005, Canada opened 31 new missions, and between 1999 and 2004 there has been a 50-percent increase in consular demands. But some missions, such as Beirut, have only one or two trained diplomats — so host-country nationals and locally-hired Canadians who are not part of the Foreign Service are doing much of the work.

In the view of one retired Canadian ambassador, the problem is only partly financial: the real problem is a shortage of trained diplomats. "I think [Canada's international presence] has been damaged," he says. "My belief, my conviction, is for Canada to be served well abroad, it needs to be served by Foreign Service officers."

The Cost of Secrecy

The annual financial costs attributable to the national security classification system reached a record high of \$9.2 billion in 2005, up \$1.2 billion from 2004, according to a new report from the Information Security Oversight Office (www.archives.gov/isoo/reports/2005-cost-report.pdf).

That figure does not, however, include spending by the Central Intelligence Agency, which classifies its cost data. Otherwise, the government share of this expenditure is estimated to be \$7.7 billion. An additional \$1.5 billion was spent by government contractors in the private sector. Classification-related costs include not merely the direct costs of classifying information, which are modest, but also the derivative costs of the personnel security clearance system,



physical security for classified material, classified computer security, and more. In recent years, spending on physical security has climbed sharply, according to the report.

The ISOO, established by executive order, reports directly to the president on national security classification policy (www.archives.gov/isoo).

In congressional testimony a year ago, ISOO Director William Leonard argued that overclassification is a barrier to critical information-sharing. "There's over 50 percent of the information that, while it may meet the criteria for classification, really should not be classified in terms of what we lose," Leonard told the House Government Reform Committee. "The price we pay for classification outweighs any advantage we perceive we gain" (www.fas.org/sgp/congress/2004/082404transcript.html).

This and other developments in the area of classification policy can be found in *Secrecy News*, an online publication of the Federation of American Scientists' Project on Government Secrecy (<http://fas.org/sgp/news/secrecy/>).

New Index Grades Countries on Environmental Stewardship

Scientists are finding increasingly useful ways to evaluate and rank the environmental health of countries. Two promising new indices — the Environmental Sustainability Index and the Environmental Performance Index — have been launched at the past two annual World Economic Forum meetings in Davos, Switzerland. Available online, both the ESI and EPI are products of a joint initiative between the Yale Center for Environmental Law and Policy and the Center for International Earth Science Information Network of Columbia University, in collaboration with the World Economic Forum and

Site of the Month: www.eDiplomat.com

Need to review the latest foreign policy statement from the U.K. Foreign Ministry, or get an official biography from the Cambodian Ministry of External Affairs? How about consulting the staff directory of Singapore's mission in Canberra? And, wouldn't it be nice to get a post report with nothing but the click of the mouse?

eDiplomat.com is a global portal for diplomats that offers links to the official foreign ministry Web sites of 130 countries, and the Web sites of missions around the world for 26 of those countries. It also provides links to the State Department's Post Reports, and to the Web sites of diplomatic clubs and associations around the world.

The site also offers quick links to such things as "World's 50 Best Restaurants" and "International Job Vacancies."

An independent, nonprofit organization that is not affiliated with any government, *eDiplomat* was launched by a group of diplomats who recognized the potential of the Internet to serve as a platform for connecting diplomats and those interested in diplomacy. Its self-declared mission is to "raise awareness of and increase interaction among diplomats across the globe."

the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission (<http://sed.ac.ciesin.columbia.edu/es/esi/>).

"Our ultimate aim is to make our work policy-relevant," Daniel Esty, Hillhouse Professor of Environmental Law and Policy at Yale's School of Forestry and Environmental Studies and a member of the ESI-EPI research team, explains in the spring 2006 issue of *Environment Yale*. Though the two indices are complementary, the EPI, introduced in January, is focused on current performance and is more concerned with results.

EPI ranks 133 countries based on their performance within six policy categories: environmental health, air quality, water resources, biodiversity and habitat, productive natural resources (e.g., farmland, forests, fisheries) and sustainable energy. Each category, in turn, is measured by two to five indicators, or data sets. Each indicator measures the distance a country is from an established policy target, based on goals set by treaties, by international organizations or, sim-

ply, by the best available science. (For instance, the optimum target for sustainable energy is 100 percent; and that for childhood mortality due to environmental factors is 0.)

New Zealand was ranked first in the 2006 EPI, followed by Sweden, Finland, the Czech Republic and the U.K. The U.S. ranked 28th, with a strong performance on some issues and a weak one on others. In particular, the U.S. lags its peers on water conservation, sustainable energy and managing productive natural resources.

While the EPI spotlights pollution control and resource management efforts for which governments can be held accountable, the ESI presents a more complete, long-term picture of environmental sustainability as it includes a host of factors over which the current government has no control. For instance, the U.K., which ranks fifth on the EPI, is 66th on the ESI. Though the country "is now managing well what it has to work with," Esty notes, it has "300 years of industrialization to live down." ■