

RELEASE IN FULL

**From:** Mills, Cheryl D <MillsCD@state.gov>  
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## Reasonable people can disagree on whatever it was

By Al Kamen  
 Monday, October 19, 2009

They call it the World's Greatest Deliberative Body (WGDB), Part I.

The Senate Judiciary Committee last week was reviewing an amendment by Sen. *Richard Durbin* (D-Ill.) to the USA Patriot Act to clarify the legal standard needed for an investigation under the act. The amendment was intended to provide greater protections from abuse by investigators.

His colleague, Sen. *Amy Klobuchar* (D-Minn.), spoke in opposition, agreeing with committee Chairman *Patrick Leahy* (D-Vt.) and ranking Republican *Jeff Sessions* (Ala.) that additional protections are not needed.

"I would just point to the actual language in here," Klobuchar said, "which is, it's not like this is some pie-in-the-sky standard here. I mean, it specifically says," she noted approvingly, reading aloud from the bill, that there have to be "reasonable grounds to believe that the information sought is relevant to an authorized national security investigation," and you can't investigate someone just for exercising free speech rights and there's got to be some suspected foreign agent involved.

"So I just, for anyone listening to this, it is not like there is no standard," she concluded. "There is a standard in place here."

"That's the standard that is in the bill now?" Sessions asked.

Klobuchar nodded that it was.

No it's not, Durbin interrupted. "Senator Klobuchar, you just read my amendment," not the bill, he said -- "and I think it's critically important that you understand what we're establishing here."

Whatever. Klobuchar voted against the amendment, which got only a handful of votes anyway.

### Blame the gatekeeper

The usual pattern at the State Department is that the new secretary arrives at Foggy Bottom for the first day of work and enters to rousing cheers from career Foreign Service folks hoping the new boss will actually heed their expert advice. (They are, by nature, an optimistic crowd.)

Then, after 7 months, 8 days and 12 hours, on average, the grumbling begins that the secretary is "not accessible" to senior career folks, that she's overly protected by her personal staff, that the promised "open door" has slammed shut. The fingers start pointing, usually at the secretary's chief of staff. These days, that's *Cheryl Mills*, who holds that post for Secretary of State *Hillary Rodham Clinton*.

We're hearing complaints even from members of the inner circle that the overworked Mills -- chief of staff, counselor, overseer of Haiti policy and food security policy and the department motor pool (okay, not really) -- has made entry to Clinton's suite something like penetrating the Green Zone in Baghdad.

Not so, says Undersecretary of State *William Burns*, the department's top career official. "This secretary is in touch every day with as many people across the department as possible, and Cheryl is a big part of making that happen."

Another senior State official said Clinton has been on the road a lot: Asia in July and Africa in August and Ireland and Moscow just the other day, and soon she'll be back on the road, pretty much until Thanksgiving. There have also been a bunch of meetings of late on AfPak matters.

Hey, just telling you what we're hearing.

### **In a timely fashion . . .**

The Loop Better-Late-Than-Never award this year goes to the State Department's personnel bureau. The bureau, in an Oct. 13 notice, said it had awarded a \$1.6 million contract to *Campion Services Inc.* in West Lafayette, Ind., to "assist the department in ensuring that all examinations for Foreign Service [jobs] have been professionally validated and constitute a reliable means of identifying those applicants with the greatest possibility of success in the foreign service."

Well, good thing the department's only been hiring for a couple of hundred years.

### **The rest of the résumé**

The White House last week announced that President Obama had selected *Jessie H. Roberson*, a nuclear expert and senior vice president of environmental affairs for the Atlantic Sea Island Group, to be a member of the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board. The bio notes her previous jobs, even her undergraduate degree in nuclear engineering.

Name sounds familiar. Roberson, Roberson: Wasn't she *Dubya's* appointee as assistant secretary of the Energy Department for environmental management, the \$6 billion-a-year weapons cleanup program? That's not mentioned in the White House release, but she was there from 2001 to 2004.

### **Waterboarding for kids?**

WGDB, Part II: Sen. *Tom Coburn* (R-Okla.) must be feeling stressed these days over the travails of his pal, Sen. *John Ensign* (R-Nev.). For those who missed it, Coburn took to the Senate floor last week to decry federal deficits, which are not, for him, an abstraction.

"It is deeply personal with me," Coburn explained. "I have five grandchildren. I look in their eyes, and I see the potential of their lives and all of these other children who are out there. You know what? We are going to waterboard them. That is what we are going to do. We are going to waterboard them. We are going to flood them with debt. We are going to shackle their opportunities. We are going to limit their possibilities because we don't have the courage to make the difference for their future."

**Wait a minute! It's just a dunk in the water.**

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