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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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Executive Registry

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July 1, 1974

MEMORANDUM

TO : HEADS OF ALL FEDERAL AGENCIES

FROM : The Chief of Protocol *lawr*

SUBJECT: Foreign Gifts and Decorations Act of  
1966: Employee Responsibilities

The Foreign Gifts and Decorations Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-673), as amended in 1967 (Public Law 90-83), 5 USC §7342, 22 USC §2621, declares Congressional policy that employees of the United States Government shall not request or otherwise encourage the tender of any gift or decoration from any foreign government or official thereof, and may not accept or retain any such gift or decoration, except as specifically provided in the Act. By Executive Order 11320, dated December 12, 1966 (31 F.R. 15789), the President delegated to the Secretary of State the authority to prescribe rules and regulations to carry out the purposes of the Act. These regulations were published on April 28, 1967 (32 F.R. 6569) and are contained in Title 22, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 3.

In furtherance of the responsibility delegated to the Secretary of State, this memorandum is being circulated to remind all employees of their responsibilities under the Act and regulations and to respond to inquiries concerning their provisions which have arisen from time to time. It is requested that all agency heads bring this information to the attention of employees of their agencies.

The Act is applicable to all employees of the United States Government as defined in 5 USC §7342. In addition, members of the families and households of such employees are included within

the Act's coverage. These persons are under an obligation not to accept gifts from foreign governments or their representatives, except when the gift is of minimal value and tendered as a souvenir or mark of courtesy and except under circumstances in which refusal of a gift of more than minimal value "would be likely to cause offense or embarrassment or otherwise adversely affect the foreign relations of the United States." Decorations, including "any order, device, medal, insignia or emblem" from a foreign government, may be accepted, retained and worn only if "tendered in recognition of active field service in time of combat operations or awarded for other outstanding or unusually meritorious performance" and only upon approval by the employee's agency head, with concurrence of the Secretary of State. These restrictions affect gifts and decorations received on or after October 14, 1966.

Gifts of more than minimal value which are accepted by employees under circumstances described in the preceding paragraph may not be retained, but rather become the property of the United States and must be deposited with the Chief of Protocol for disposal. It is emphasized that members of the families of employees are subject to the same standards and responsibilities under the Act and regulations as the employees themselves. A "member of the family and household" is defined as "a relative by blood, marriage or adoption who is a resident of the household." An adult son or daughter, living in his or her own household, and not individually covered by the Act, would, thus, not be subject to its requirements. Even if a gift is tendered by a foreign government or foreign official for basically personal, as opposed to official, reasons, it must be treated as property of the United States and so deposited.

Under certain circumstances, the Chief of Protocol may authorize the agency in which the donee is employed to retain the gift for official use (such as display in a public room); otherwise, the Chief of Protocol must forward it to the General Services Administration for disposal. All gifts which become property of the Government under the Act must be handled in this way. All

employees and family members covered by the law and regulations must deposit such gifts with the Chief of Protocol as quickly as possible.

In view of the importance of the matters described above, heads of agencies are encouraged to assist employees in familiarizing themselves with their individual responsibilities. The Department of State would be pleased to render further assistance in this effort and will respond to any inquiries which may be raised.

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