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GAO

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STATE PASS EPA WASHDC, DOI WASHDC, OSTP WASHDC, DHHS FOR
OIH (BELMONT), NAIROBI FOR FIGGINS, FRANKFURT FOR JONES
AND LEAVINS

E.O. 12356: N/A

TAGS: SENV, ENRG, GAO, WMO, UNEP, WHO

SUBJECT: INTEREST OF GAO IN U.S. COORDINATION OF CLIMATE
CHANGE POLICY

1. SUMMARY: GAO STAFF MEMBERS JONES AND LEAVINS VISITED
GENEVA DECEMBER 4-9 TO INTERVIEW MISSION OFFICERS, WMO,
WHO, AND REPRESENTATIVES FROM SEVERAL GENEVA MISSIONS
ABOUT USG AND INTERNATIONAL RESPONSES TO THE CLIMATE
CHANGE ISSUE. JONES AND LEAVINS WERE RESPONDING TO
CONGRESSIONAL CONCERNS ABOUT COORDINATION OF THE USG
RESPONSE TO CLIMATE CHANGE. THEY ALSO SOUGHT
INFORMATION ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE INTERNATIONAL
ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED AND THOSE OF OTHER COUNTRIES.
THE GENERAL ANSWER WAS THAT THE USG WAS DOING A GOOD JOB
OF SPEAKING WITH ONE VOICE IN THE INTERNATIONAL ARENA.
BASED ON ITS PERFORMANCE AT THE NOVEMBER 9-11 MEETING OF
THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE, OES WAS
CREDITED WITH BEING EFFECTIVE IN ENUNCIATING A UNIFIED
U.S. STRATEGY AND POSITION. JONES AND LEAVINS TOLD THE
AMBASSADOR THAT THEIR TENTATIVE CONCLUSION WAS THAT THE
USG HAS DONE WELL IN THE PUBLIC AREA, BUT THEIR
INTERLOCUTORS WERE ALSO AWARE OF INTERNAL COORDINATION
PROBLEMS. THEY NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT SUCH PROBLEMS ARE
NOT UNIQUE TO OUR GOVERNMENT.

2. JONES AND LEAVINS ALSO NOTED THAT OTHER NATIONS AND
THE PRINCIPAL INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED, WMO
AND UNEP, ARE PROBABLY MORE CONCERNED ABOUT TRYING TO
OVERCOME THE PROBLEMS OF MULTI-AGENCY COORDINATION ON
THEIR OWN TURF. ACCORDINGLY, SOME CONCERNS WERE
EXPRESSED ABOUT THE NUMBER OF U.S. AGENCIES INVOLVED IN
ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY AND THE MULTIPLICITY OF INTERESTS
THEY REPRESENT. THEY ASKED THEIR INTERLOCUTORS ABOUT
THE ADVISABILITY OF ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL CLIMATE
CHANGE "CZAR" OR ESTABLISHING A TASK FORCE ON
INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES. BOTH ARE APPARENTLY
STEPS WHICH CONGRESSMAN DINGELL HAS BEEN CONSIDERING.

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3. THE AUSTRALIANS AND CANADIANS, WHO DIFFER SHARPLY ON THE EXTENT OF CLIMATE CHANGE, DESCRIBED THEIR GOVERNMENTS' PROCESSES OF INTERAGENCY COORDINATION, WHICH ARE MORE CENTRALIZED THAN OUR OWN. WMO OFFICIAL MOREL DESCRIBED TO JONES AND LEAVINS THE FRENCH SYSTEM OF INTERAGENCY COORDINATION, WHICH IS MANAGED BY A STANDING TASK FORCE, INDEPENDENTLY FUNDED, WHICH HE USED TO HEAD. JONES AND LEAVIN SAID THEY WOULD SEEK TO INTERVIEW THIS FRENCH ORGANIZATION. END SUMMARY.

4. BILL LEAVINS AND JIM JONES OF THE GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE'S FRANKFURT OFFICE CONDUCTED A SERIES OF INTERVIEWS IN GENEVA DECEMBER 4-9 TO LOOK INTO THE DEGREE OF COORDINATION OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE TO CLIMATE CHANGE. THE GAO HAS BEEN ASKED TO REPORT ON THIS TOPIC BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE HOUSE ENERGY AND COMMERCE COMMITTEE, REP. JOHN D. DINGELL. GAO REPRESENTATIVES MET WITH MISSION OFFICERS, INCLUDING THE AMBASSADOR, HEALTH AND SCIENCE ATTACHE DENNIS JOHNSON, AND MISSION CONSULTANT (AND RETIRED NOAA EMPLOYEE) GORDON CARTWRIGHT. CARTWRIGHT BRIEFED JONES AND LEAVINS AT LENGTH ON THE ROLES OF THE VARIOUS U.S. AGENCIES INVOLVED IN INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY. JONES AND LEAVINS MET TWICE WITH CANADIAN JIM BRUCE, DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANIZATION, AND WITH MEMBERS OF HIS STAFF, INCLUDING: THOMAS POTTER, DIRECTOR, WORLD WEATHER WATCH PROGRAM, DR. A. MOREL, DIRECTOR OF THE WORLD CLIMATE RESEARCH PROGRAM, AND N. SUNDARAMAN, SECRETARY OF THE INTERNATIONAL PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE. THEY MET ALSO WITH OFFICERS FROM THE MISSIONS OF AUSTRALIA, GREAT BRITAIN, AND THE U.K. WHO FOLLOW ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES.

5. JONES AND LEAVINS RAISED THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS IN ALL INTERVIEWS.

-- HAS THE U.S. PRESENTED A COORDINATED APPROACH ON INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES?

-- IS THE U.S. SPEAKING WITH ONE VOICE IN THE INTERNATIONAL ARENA?

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STATE PASS EPA WASHDC, DOI WASHDC, OSTP WASHDC, DHHS FOR OIH (BELMONT), NAIROBI FOR FIGGINS, FRANKFURT FOR JONES AND LEAVINS

E.O. 12356: N/A

TAGS: SENV, ENRG, GAO, WMO, UNEP, WHO

SUBJECT: INTEREST OF GAO IN U.S. COORDINATION OF CLIMATE

-- WOULD U.S. POLICY BE BETTER SERVED BY THE APPOINTMENT OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY CZAR OR A TASK FORCE TO COORDINATE U.S. ACTIVITIES ON INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES?

-- HOW DO THE VARIOUS INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES INTERACT WITH THE U.S. GOVERNMENT ON ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES?

6. AT WMO, SEVERAL INTERLOCUTORS DESCRIBED THE RELATION BETWEEN VARIOUS ELEMENTS OF THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION AND ELEMENTS OF THE U.S. ACADEMIC COMMUNITY. SUNDARAMAN NOTED THAT U.S. COORDINATION SEEMED TO HAVE IMPROVED MARKEDLY, BUT THERE WERE STILL PROBLEMS TRYING TO DEAL WITH SO MANY AGENCIES. FOR INSTANCE, IT IS SOMETIMES DIFFICULT TO IDENTIFY WHICH INDIVIDUALS SHOULD BE NOMINATED FOR CERTAIN TASKS. HE

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SUGGESTED THAT PROGRAMS MIGHT BE EFFECTIVELY COORDINATED AT THE LEVEL OF THE PRESIDENT'S SCIENCE ADVISOR. DIRECTOR OF WORLD CLIMATE RESEARCH PROGRAM MOREL WAS INITIALLY CRITICAL OF U.S. COORDINATION ON INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES (COMPARING IT UNFAVORABLY TO THE FRENCH TASK FORCE HE USED TO HEAD) BUT, WHEN PRESSED, DESCRIBED FOR OVER AN HOUR THE LARGE RANGE OF COOPERATIVE PROGRAMS UNDERTAKEN BY HIS OFFICE WITH THE NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION, NOAA, NASA, AND THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY. THESE INCLUDE SUCH DIVERSE AND EXPENSIVE PROGRAMS AS SUPPORT FOR WMO'S TROPICAL ATMOSPHERE RESEARCH PROGRAM, ANTARCTIC RESEARCH, AND WEATHER SATELLITES. HE NOTED THAT THE LARGE NUMBER OF U.S. AGENCIES ENGAGED IN ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH ENABLED HIM TO HAVE A VARIETY OF FUNDING SOURCES FOR HIS RESEARCH PROJECTS.

7. WMO DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL JIM BRUCE EXPLAINED THE ROLE OF HIS AGENCY IN GATHERING DATA TO SUBSTANTIATE CLIMATE CHANGE, EMPHASIZING THE ORGANIZATION'S MANY YEARS OF AUTHORITATIVE STUDY OF THE EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE. HE STATED FRANKLY WHAT IS WELL-KNOWN, THAT THERE WERE TENSIONS BETWEEN WMO AND THE UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAM (UNEP). THE CHANGE IN THE CLIMATE WAS, HE SAID, DISCOVERED BY THE CAREFUL COLLECTION OF DATA BY WMO. IN CONTRAST, UNEP HAS BEEN QUICK TO TAKE CREDIT FOR THE PUBLICIZING OF THE CLIMATE CHANGE ISSUE. IN SOME RESPECTS, HE SAID, THE TENSION BETWEEN WMO AND UNEP REFLECTS THE DIFFERENT ROLES OF, FOR INSTANCE, EPA IN THE U.S., WHICH WORKS CLOSELY WITH UNEP, AND NOAA AND THE NSF, WHICH WORK CLOSELY WITH WMO.

8. ON THE SUBJECT OF THE COORDINATION OF U.S. POLICY, BRUCE (AND ALL WMO OFFICIALS) SAID THE U.S. HAD SPOKEN FROM ONE SCRIPT AT THE RECENT MEETING OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE (IPCC) AND ON ALL INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES THEY COULD RECALL. BRUCE SAID THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT EXERCISED STRONGER CENTRAL CONTROL OVER THE POLICYMAKING PROCESS THROUGH ITS DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT. HOWEVER, AS IN THE U.S., A MULTIPLICITY OF INTERESTS WERE REPRESENTED BY DIFFERENT CANADIAN AGENCIES. IN HIS DIRECT DEALINGS WITH U.S. AGENCIES, BRUCE SAID, HE WAS SOMETIMES WORRIED BECAUSE OF THE DIFFERING PERSPECTIVES EXPRESSED BY THE U.S. AGENCIES, BUT NOTED THIS REPRESENTED DIFFERING CONSTITUENCIES.

9. IN HIS TALKS WITH JONES AND LEAVINS, MOREL SUGGESTED THAT THE USG CONSIDER THE FORMATION OF A SCIENTIFIC/TECHNICAL GROUP WHICH WOULD COORDINATE U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY. HE SAID THAT HE HAD CHAIRED A SIMILAR GROUP IN FRANCE. HE EMPHASIZED THAT SUCH A GROUP MUST HAVE DIRECT APPROPRIATIONS, IN OTHER WORDS, HAVE SUFFICIENT RESOURCES TO BE INDEPENDENT OF THE AGENCIES IT COORDINATES. JONES AND LEAVINS EXPRESSED INTEREST IN CALLING ON THIS ORGANIZATION, CHAIRED BY (FNU) DUPLASSEY UNDER THE AEGIS OF THE FRENCH MINISTRY OF SCIENCE. IN GERMANY, MOREL SAID, THE PROCESS IS HIGHLY CENTRALIZED UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF THE FEDERAL MINISTRY FOR TECHNOLOGY AND RESEARCH.

10. WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION: JONES AND LEAVINS HAD A
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SUBJECT: INTEREST OF GAO IN U.S. COORDINATION OF CLIMATE

SHORT VISIT WITH G. OZOLINS, WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION IN WHO'S DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH. OZOLINS SAID THAT WHO HAD BEEN AN OBSERVER AT THE IPCC AND THAT HE WAS JUST BEGINNING TO BE INVOLVED IN THE CLIMATE CHANGE ISSUE. HE SAID THAT WHO/EH IS EMBARKING ON A GLOBAL ASSESSMENT OF HEALTH PROBLEMS AND CLIMATE CHANGE IN COOPERATION WITH THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE ON PROBLEMS OF THE ENVIRONMENT (SCOPE) AND THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF SCIENTIFIC UNIONS (ICSU). THROUGH THE US COMMITTEE FOR SCOPE, THIS EFFORT IS LIKELY TO INVOLVE THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCE AND A SEARCH FOR SPONSORS. OZOLINS DID POINT OUT THAT WHO/EH IS WORKING CLOSELY WITH EPA AND NIEHS AS WHO COLLABORATING CENTERS. (COMMENT: CLIMATE CHANGE OBVIOUSLY IMPACTS SIGNIFICANTLY ON MANY AREAS OF HEALTH. IT IS THEREFORE SURPRISING THAT THE HEALTH ASPECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE HAVE NOT RECEIVED MORE ATTENTION SO FAR. THE HEALTH SECTOR IS LIKELY TO BECOME MORE INVOLVED IN THE FUTURE. END COMMENT.)

11. MEETINGS AT OTHER MISSIONS: JONES AND LEAVINS WERE BRIEFED BY CANADIAN MISSIONOFF SLOANE ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFORTS OF THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE (ECE) WHICH HOSTS A NUMBER OF ENVIRONMENTAL MEETINGS AND WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CONVENTION ON LONG-RANGE TRANSBOUNDARY AIR POLLUTION. HE SAID THE U.S. SPOKE WITH ONE VOICE AT THE MEETINGS HE HAD OBSERVED, MOST RECENTLY THE IPCC. SLOANE EMPHASIZED THAT ENVIRONMENTAL TOPICS WERE ONE OF THE LARGEST SINGLE AREAS OF DISPUTE BETWEEN THE U.S. AND CANADA, SO WHAT WERE OFTEN BASIC POLICY DISAGREEMENTS WITH THE U.S. SHOULD NOT BE CONSIDERED CRITICISM OF THE U.S. INTERAGENCY POLICY PROCESS. HE SAID THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT AT TIMES SOUGHT DIRECTLY TO INFLUENCE INTERAGENCY PLAYERS WHO HAD VIEWS COMPATIBLE WITH ITS OWN. SOMETIMES, HE SAID, THE U.S. PARTICIPATION IN WORKING GROUPS COULD PROFIT FROM GREATER COORDINATION, BUT THE CANADIANS GENERALLY WANT THE U.S. TO TAKE A STRONGER ROLE IN WORKING GROUPS (REFLECTING A CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY WHICH IS MORE ACTIVIST THAN OUR OWN.) SLOANE LIKEWISE PRAISED THE U.S. NEGOTIATORS OF THE NITROGEN OXIDE PROTOCOL. SLOANE CONFIRMED WHAT JIM BRUCE HAD SAID, THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT IN CANADA PLAYS A STRONGER ROLE IN COORDINATING ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY THAT ANY COMPARABLE U.S. AGENCY BUT CITED SEVEN AGENCIES ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN FORMULATING CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY.

12. AT THE AUSTRALIAN MISSION, COUNSELOR MIKE SMITH SAID ALSO THE U.S. SPOKE WITH ONE VOICE IN THE IPCC. AUSTRALIA, HE SAID, WAS MORE SKEPTICAL ABOUT THE SCIENTIFIC DATA THAN THE U.S. HAD BEEN. IN THE OZONE PROTOCOL, HE SAID, THE U.S. HAD TAKEN A VERY ACTIVIST POLICY AND NEGOTIATED VERY EFFECTIVELY. HE NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT THOSE IN OTHER GOVERNMENTS WHO WANT TO "DRAW ON A STRAND" IN U.S. POLICY CAN DO SO. HE RECALLED THAT THE AUSTRALIAN AND U.S. TECHNICAL AGENCIES HAD WORKED CLOSELY OVER THE YEARS AND WERE FAR MORE LIKELY TO AGREE THAN SOME AGENCIES IN THE SAME GOVERNMENT.

13. SMITH SAID THAT THE AUSTRALIAN APPROACH TO CLIMATE CHANGE WAS MORE COORDINATED THAN OUR OWN. THE SCIENCE COUNCIL TAKES THE LEAD, WITH FOREIGN AFFAIRS IN A SUBSIDIARY ROLE. BUT AT LEAST FIVE OTHER AGENCIES ARE

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ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN THE PROCESS. FOR INSTANCE, HE SAID, EACH WORKING PARTY OF THE IPCC HAS BEEN ASSIGNED TO A DIFFERENT AUSTRALIAN MINISTRY.

14. SEVERAL INTERLOCUTORS COMMENTED THAT WHILE THE USG HAD BEEN EFFECTIVE AND WELL-COORDINATED AT THE IPCC, THERE WAS ALSO GENERAL AWARENESS THAT THE UNITED STATES DOES HAVE PROBLEMS IN REACHING INTERNAL AGREEMENT. THESE PROBLEMS, HOWEVER, IT WAS COMMENTED, WERE NOT/NOT UNIQUE TO THE CLIMATE CHANGE ISSUE NOR UNIQUE TO THE USG.

15. COMMENT: IT SEEMS CLEAR TO THIS MISSION THAT CLIMATE CHANGE IS AN AREA THAT WILL TAKE ON INCREASED
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IMPORTANCE. WE FOUND JONES' AND LEAVINS' VISIT VERY HELPFUL IN AIDING OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE DIMENSIONS OF THE ISSUES INVOLVED AND LOOK FORWARD TO THEIR REPORT.
PETRONE

END OF MESSAGE

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