

FINAL

Inside: Washington Business
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Washington (GMAA) on Page A2

The Washington Post

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2004

Weather

Today: Sunny, mild.
High 58, Low 40.
Tuesday: Mostly sunny.
High 58, Low 42.
Details, Page B6

137TH YEAR No. 246 MZ DC

IN THE LOOP

Al Kamen

Rumor's as Phony as a \$2 Bill

In this time of change in the upper echelons of government, it's important for senior officials to be able to read even the slightest indication, no matter how subtle, to determine where they stand on the presidential firmament.

The signals might come in traditional ways: leaks to the media, body language at meetings, other Cabinet members not answering your calls, staffers not laughing at your jokes.

It seems they can come in very creative ways as well. For example, anyone pondering the fate of Treasury Secretary **John W. Snow** might browse eBay and find this:

"Choice Uncirculated 2003 \$2.00 Minneapolis FRN With The Hand Autographed Signature Of, Then Secretary Of The Treasury, John W. Snow Grading Choice Uncirculated! Mr. Snow Was In Office A Very Short Time, Making Him A Very Scarce Signer, He Signed Very Little & Is Tough To Locate Any Example Of On Currency!"

We're checking to see who replaced him.

In Baghdad, Getting to the Bottom of It

Just found that Ouija board? Or maybe your old dowsing stick reappeared in the back of the closet? Don't lose them again. Either could come in handy if you win a contract in Iraq to find tunnels under a Baghdad embassy annex.

Seems parts of the sprawling compound grounds were home to some former Iraqi intelligence facilities and are bordered by former Iraqi prison quarters, the embassy solicitation explains.

"There are currently numerous unsecured manhole openings and drain pipes surrounding the compound. There are also areas on the ground where you can visibly see that there are hollow areas beneath the ground surface. The key areas that may contain evacuation tunnels are in between the former intelligence facility and the prison compound." Hmm. . . . This would be where the prisoners worked on escaping before the torture began?

You'll need to use "devices such as X-ray and seismic equipment (including Ground Penetrating Radar)" and you must ensure that you don't damage the ground too much. "Only a minimal amount of digging and ground breaking should occur." After all, how deep could they have dug?

The project begins Saturday. And don't worry about security clearances, they "are not required." Really? For guys digging in the ground and such? You sure?

No More Mister Nice Person

Being a government spokesman can seem like a glorious business, jousting with the media, getting your mug on television and so on. But it can also be downright ugly.

Take a question lobbed Friday at State Department spokesman **Richard A. Boucher** from a Greek reporter. Seems the Greeks are

still furious over a decision by Washington to call Macedonia "Macedonia" and not FYROM, or the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

The Greeks claim the name as the birthplace of **Alexander the Great** and took great umbrage at the post-election surprise. But the name change was intended to make sure a referendum challenging European Union-backed laws to empower the ethnic Albanian minority would be defeated. The United States feared passage of the referendum would have sparked a civil war on Greece's northern border.

No matter. "Are you aware, Mr. Boucher, that **Adolf Hitler** was trying to create a 'Greater Albania,'" the reporter asked, and now a "member of the Axis . . . today is your great ally? How do you explain this phenomenon: Hitler does U.S. foreign policy?"

Boucher rejected the question as "highly insulting and totally untrue." What's more, as we all know, Hitler started a few wars, but in this case the United States has successfully stopped . . . oh, never mind.

Probably Anti-Housewarming, Too

It's not often that a Washington lobbyist gets to be the focus of a censure motion in the British House of Commons, but anti-global warming lobbyist **Myron Ebell** managed that trick earlier this month.

Seems Ebell, interviewed Nov. 3 on BBC Radio, said: "We have people who know nothing about climate science, like Sir **David King**, your chief scientific adviser, who are alarmist and continually promote this ridiculous claim. Sir David has no expertise in climate science."

One newspaper reported the shot and described Ebell, who works for the **Competitive Enterprise Institute**, as "one of **President George Bush's** top climate change advisers."

Next thing you know there's a censure move in the House of Commons, saying it "deplores in the strongest possible terms the unfounded and insulting criticism of Sir David King, the Government's Chief Scientist, by Myron Ebell, an adviser to U.S. President George W. Bush, on climate change; notes that Mr. Ebell is Director of Global Warming and International Environmental Policy at the Competitive Enterprise Institute in Washington, an organization funded by, amongst others, ExxonMobil and the American Petroleum Institute; fervently hopes that Mr. Ebell's comments do not represent official U.S. policy." Well, not precisely.

Take a Chance on Bennett Being Right

Don't forget: Former education secretary **William J. Bennett** will be analyzing "The Meaning of the Moral Mandate" in the presidential election at 10:30 a.m. today at the Heritage Foundation. And no, there aren't any slot machines at Heritage.