

consultations

To assist and inform the diplomatic and consular communities

OFM Director Confirmed

F Francis X. Taylor has been confirmed as Assistant Secretary of State for Diplomatic Security and the new Director of OFM. Ambassador Taylor moves to the positions from that of State Department Coordinator for Counterterrorism with the rank of Ambassador-at-Large.

Before joining the State Department in 2001, Taylor served with distinction for 31 years in numerous military command and staff positions, rising to the rank of Brigadier General. His assignments most recently include heading the Air Force Office of Special Investigations with responsibility for providing commanders of all Air Force activities with independent professional investigative services in fraud, counterintelligence and major criminal matters.

From August 1995 to July 1996, Taylor served as Director of Special Investigations in the Office of the Secretary of the Air Force Inspector General. He was Director of Mission Guidance in the Office of Special Investigations at Bolling Air Force Base from August 1994 to August 1995. From July 1990 to July 1994, he led two Air Force Offices of Special Investigations both at higher headquarters and overseas bases, and from July 1988 to July 1990, he was Deputy Commander of 487th Combat Support Group. He retired from active duty on July 1, 2001.

Ambassador Taylor has received numerous awards, including the Distinguished Service Medal, the National Intelligence Distinguished Service Medal, the Defense Superior Service Medal, and the Legion of Merit. He received his commission in 1970 through the University of Notre Dame ROTC program, where he graduated with distinction. He also has a master's degree in Government and International Studies from that university. ■



inside this issue

- Diplomatic Shipments 2
- Utility Taxes 2
- Please Don't Apply 3
- Lynwood Dent 3
- New Faces 3
- Regional Activities 3
- Warning! 4
- Miami Protocol 4
- Directory 4

New Deputy Assistant Secretary Sends Greetings

To the Diplomatic and Consular Communities: Greetings ...

It is an honor to be succeeding Ted Strickler as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Office of Foreign Missions. My previous assignments as Minister Counselor for Administrative Affairs in London and Berlin, and as the Executive Director of the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs had already given me an appreciation of OFM's successful role in reciprocity issues. Yet, I'm only beginning to fully appreciate OFM's mission to the diplomatic and consular missions, and their personnel, in our country.

The breadth and complexity of the issues with which OFM deals are exceptional. I am equally impressed with OFM's staff, their depth of experience and their commitment to customer service, both in Washington and in our Regional Offices across the country. I look forward with anticipation to working with them and with you and your missions.

As Ted wrote in the *Consultations*' inaugural issue, "This publication is intended to provide information in a style that is more readable and informative than the traditional method of using diplomatic notes. Our goal is to serve you in the best way possible." I want to reaffirm that



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Port Inspection Headaches?

One of the consequences of September 2001 has been a steady increase in the random inspection of all types of shipments at U.S. ports of entry.

Shipping companies naturally incur additional labor costs when required by Customs to move cargo to an inspection site for x-ray, or to open sealed containers. In turn, they are likely to pass these unanticipated costs on to their clients. When the client is a foreign mission, or a diplomat, such costs can mean an unexpected, and significant, expense. The Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations says that diplomats are not exempt from “charges for storage, cartage and similar services.” Inspection labor costs fall into this non-exempt category.

The U.S. Government cannot reimburse charges incurred as a result of port inspection. However, in response to the concerns expressed, the Office of Foreign Missions suggests several steps that can be taken to reduce such costs.

First, make sure that the Bill of Lading or other consignment documents prepared by the freight forwarder or shipping company clearly states that this is a diplomatic shipment. Even shipments to consulates can be labeled as a diplomatic shipment.

While diplomatic cargo is fully subject to inspection, OFM has learned through its conversations with Customs and Department of Agriculture inspectors that the most common reason for the inspection of diplomatic shipments is simply that the shipment is not identified as diplomatic in nature and intended for a foreign mission. It is the mission’s interests to emphasize to the freight forwarder that they must remind U.S. Customs that theirs is a diplomatic shipment.

Secondly, instruct the shipping company, in writing, that the mission must be notified immediately when a shipment is selected for inspection. If possible, add that requirement to your contract.

Lastly, if the freight forwarder is unable to obtain a reversal of Customs’ decision, then the mission should inform the Diplomatic Tax and Customs Office immediately. OFM will investigate and determine if it can intervene. (However, since all diplomatic cargo shipments are legally subject to inspection, OFM may not be successful in its efforts.)

All of the U.S. border control agencies are undergoing rapid expansion and many inspectors now on duty have limited experience with diplomatic shipments. Each mission must work with its shipper to facilitate the smooth entry of diplomatic cargo. OFM is ready to provide advice and assistance. If you have any questions on port inspections, call our Custom’s Liaison staff at 202-895-3640 or 202-895-3618. ■

New Requirements Apply

As discussed in the *Washington Post* of November 11, 2002, U.S. Customs now requires that all importers provide Customs with manifests of any cargo being shipped to the United States **24 hours before that cargo is loaded**. Since this is a security measure, the requirement to provide a cargo manifest in advance also applies to all diplomatic shipments bound for U.S. ports. OFM asks for the foreign missions’ understanding of the need for this new procedure and expresses its appreciation of their cooperation.

Frequently Asked Questions

Utility Taxes and Exemptions

Confused as to which utility taxes your mission and its staff members are responsible? You may not be the only one. Perhaps this clarification can help.

Q: Aren’t all utilities tax exempt for foreign missions?

A: No. OFM reminds the diplomatic and consular communities to remember that tax exemptions are dependent on reciprocity. Therefore, the tax liability of individual countries may differ.

Q: Which utilities are included on the OFM Tax Exemption Program?

A: The following is a list of services that, if presently taxed, may be exempt:

- telephone services
- cellular phone services
- electronic pager services
- telegraph service
- cable television service
- electric power service
- natural gas service
- heating oil
- water

Q: Cable television and electronic pager services are included?

A: Yes. While these services have always been eligible for exemption, there has been some confusion over that fact. Cable television and electronic pager services may be tax exempt on a reciprocal basis.

Q: How does one apply for exemption from these utilities?

A: To obtain exemption for any of the utility services listed above, eligible diplomats, consular officers or A&T staff members must fill out a form DSP-99 for each service from which he/she wishes to be tax exempted. They then must return the DSP-99, along with a copy of the relevant utility bill, to OFM’s office at 3507 International Place, NW, Washington, D.C. 20008.

Q: Where can I get answers to my other questions on eligibility and tax exemptions?

A: For additional information concerning exemptions and eligibility, please call Diplomatic Tax and Customs Programs at 202-895-3537. ■



The new Diplomatic ID at right may be appealing for both convenience and security, but it's not ready for mass distribution. There are more improvements on the drawing board.

Please Don't Apply

Thinking of applying for the new, smaller sized Identification (ID) Card just for the convenience of it? Please wait.

The Office of Foreign Missions asks for the patience and cooperation of the missions and their members in not asking to replace an existing ID solely for a smaller card. In accordance with established practice, the Department continues its policy not to replace an ID card unless it has been lost/stolen or there has been a change in position title.

Why not replace them all now? Because the smaller card is in fact only an interim step, necessary for keeping with the new U.S. Government directives on ID card security procedures. It is just the first phase of planned changes to a new card design still on the drawing board. To be efficient, cost effective and comply with security directives, OFM cannot issue the smaller card to everyone at this time. Therefore, during this transition phase, before the final card design is approved, only newly arrived individuals will be issued the smaller ID card. Once all changes are finalized, OFM will focus on replacing all the existing cards currently possessed by mission members. ■

Regional Activities

TSA Showcases Chicago Changes

The Transportation and Safety Administration hosted *OFM Chicago Regional Director Denise Duclon* and other federal agency heads at a discussion of upcoming changes to O'Hare Airport operations. New implementations include TSA officers assuming checkpoints now protected by Chicago Police Department and changes to jurisdictional responsibilities for arrests. Chicago will receive the first groups of officers coming out of the TSA training academy. As the busiest airport in the world, O'Hare is a TSA priority.

Dent, continued from page 1

goal. We want to reflect your interests and ideas, and will continue to use your suggestions to shape the content of future issues. Please share your thoughts by e-mailing either John Arndt at OFMquestions@state.gov, or Carol Lund, editor, at Consultations@state.gov. We look forward to hearing from you.

Now, as we look forward, let me extend to each of you, and to your families, the best wishes of the entire OFM staff for a healthy and prosperous New Year.

Lynwood Dent, DAS
OFM, U.S. Department of State



Lynwood Dent

Editor's note:

Lynwood M. Dent comes to the Office of Foreign Missions after serving as Executive Director of the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs in Washington, D.C. He joined the Foreign Service in 1975, progressing in his career to earn the rank of Minister Counselor.

Mr. Dent has served overseas in Port of Spain, Frankfurt, Sofia, Canberra, and as Minister Counselor for Administrative Affairs in both London and Berlin. His department assignments include tours in the Bureau of Administration's Executive Office as staff assistant to the Assistant Secretary for Administration, Director of the Executive Secretariat's Office of Information Resources Management, and Deputy Executive Secretary and Executive Director of the Executive Secretariat. His languages are German and Bulgarian.

More New Faces at OFM:



Robert O. Tatge

Robert Tatge is OFM's new Regional Director in New York. Tatge joined the Foreign Service in 1980, and has since served in such diverse posts as Munich (Germany), Johannesburg (South Africa), Poznan (Poland), Helsinki (Finland), Office of Legislative Affairs (Washington, D.C.), Riga (Latvia), Department of Human Resources (Washington, D.C.), and the Office of Foreign Missions (New York).

He has twice received the Superior Honor Award and three times the Meritorious Honor Award. Tatge speaks German, Swedish, Polish and Latvian. A published author, he graduated

Cum Laude with honors from Bates College with a BA in history, and earned his master's degree in American History from Brown University.

Legislative Initiative

New Jersey's State Legislature has advanced model legislation making it a legal requirement for local police to notify OFM when stopping someone who presents a Department driver license and/or otherwise claims immunity. Similar bills have been enacted by legislatures in Arizona, Maryland, Illinois, New Mexico, New Hampshire, Louisiana, Texas and Wyoming.

Kevin Earnest of OFM's Enforcement Division reviewed the proposal, submitting additional analysis and documentation concerning the Department's driver enforcement program. Enactment of the bill will better enable OFM to monitor the driving behavior of its licensees. ■

WARNING: Cigarette Trafficking is Hazardous to Careers



Contraband cigarettes displayed

The administrative officer of a West Coast consulate was recently ordered to vacate his post and depart the United States. A watchful staff member in the Los Angeles Office of Foreign Missions first noticed the unusual pattern of duty-free purchases unique to one of the 88 consular posts there. The post in question was repeatedly processing more duty-free cigarette purchases than “the Consulate General and its officers so entitled” could ever need. Interestingly, the suspicious activity temporarily ceased during an extended absence of the administrative officer from the consulate.

The U.S. Customs Service in Long Beach, California assigned a field investigator to the case, who subsequently witnessed a single rogue officer conducting multiple black market cigarette sales. The agent then successfully confiscated the contraband and obtained sworn affidavits from the buyers. More than one buyer reported that the seller had warned them, in advance, that the sales were illegal and had to remain secret.

The limited consular immunity enjoyed by the consular officer covered only his “official acts” in the performance of his duties for his country. Immunity issues did not preclude felony prosecution or sentencing for his personal criminal activity.

However, backlogged with cases of higher priority, the United States Attorney’s Office requested that an alternative to legal charges and court proceedings be found for dealing with the offender. The Office of Foreign Missions chose to close the matter by declaring his continued services unacceptable and requiring his immediate departure. ■

Miami Protocol

You would expect the practice of protocol to be well developed in Washington, D.C., but how about outside the nation’s capital? In fact, foreign VIP visitors find that many towns and cities throughout the U.S. do a great job of extending the red carpet. One very impressive example is Miami International Airport. Under the seasoned guidance of Protocol Director Irving Fourcand, MIA’s eight professional protocol officers use their multilingual skills and years of international experience to welcome over 4,000 distinguished visitors each year. Hardly a week passes without a head of government or chief of state passing through, not to mention ministers, film stars, sports figures, and myriad other celebrities. Requests for VIP handling come from many sources — foreign consulates and embassies, government offices, overseas capitals, and private civic and cultural organizations. Clearly aware that visitors form lasting impressions of a community soon after arrival, Miami International goes the extra mile to ensure that visitors feel at home. ■



Left: MIA Director of protocol and International Affairs, Irving Fourcand. Below: Miami International Airport protocol officer Rebecca Lugones (rt.) greets Assistant Secretary General of CARL-COM and Mrs. Byron W. Blake.



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