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Sent: Thursday, June 7, 2012 8:03 PM
To: H
Subject: FW: unfortunately now its news

From: Josh Rogin [mailto:
Sent: Thursday, June 07, 2012 07:38 PM
To: Smith, Dana S (PA); Toner, Mark C
Subject: unfortunately now its news

after that free beacon story, all hell broke loose. we determined that if senators are changing their views on mcgurk over this, thats the point where it becomes reportable

McGurk Iraq nomination faces Senate scrutiny due to sex allegations

Posted By Josh Rogin  **Thursday, June 7, 2012 - 7:27 PM**  

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The nomination of **Brett McGurk** to be the next U.S. ambassador to Iraq is now facing increased opposition in the Senate due to allegations he had an affair with a reporter in Baghdad in 2008 while working as a top White House advisor and may have been videotaped while engaged in a sex act on the roof of Saddam Hussein's Republican Palace with a different woman.

McGurk, who served as a senior National Security Council official and the lead negotiator of the U.S.-Iraq Status of Forces Agreement in 2008, allegedly held an extended affair with **Gina Chon**, a *Wall Street Journal* reporter, that began four years ago in Iraq, according to intimate and occasionally graphic e-mails exposed on the Cryptome website earlier this week. The *Washington Free Beacon* reported today that McGurk was married to another woman at the time and is married to Chon now.

The leaked e-mails, which could not be independently verified and were published on the Flickr site of an anonymous user named Diplojoke, show McGurk pursuing and then canoodling with Chon, a *Wall Street Journal* reporter who was also in Baghdad at the time.

McGurk and Chon did not respond to requests for comment. The State Department declined to comment.

Over in the Senate, one leading lawmaker is taking the allegations seriously. *The Cable* has confirmed that Sen. **James Inhofe** (R-OK), the second ranking Republican on the Senate Armed Services Committee, cancelled a scheduled meeting with McGurk this week when he heard about the e-mails and an allegation that McGurk was

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caught on video engaged in a sex act on the roof of Baghdad's Republican Palace, as alluded to by State Department whistleblower **Peter Van Buren** on his blog.

Inhofe's spokesman told *The Cable* that the senator won't proceed on the McGurk nomination until both allegations are cleared up.

"The senator always prefers to meet with nominees personally before giving his support. In regards to this nominee, Senator Inhofe has heard some concerning issues, and until those issues are cleared up, he will not meet with Mr. McGurk," Inhofe's spokesman **Jared Young** told *The Cable*.

Inhofe hasn't placed a formal hold on the McGurk nomination yet, but he is considering it.

Multiple sources told *The Cable* the State Department has investigated the allegation about McGurk's activity on top of the palace but was unable to find any evidence of that incident. It's unclear whether State is investigating the circumstances surrounding McGurk's affair with Chon.

Neither of these incidents were mentioned at McGurk's confirmation hearing Wednesday. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee now must approve his nomination, but no vote has yet been scheduled.

Inhofe's objection would be only one of the several potential holds McGurk could face on his path to the nomination.

As *The Cable* reported in March, Senate Armed Services Committee ranking Republican **John McCain** (R-AZ) has reservations about McGurk taking on the Baghdad post over concerns that McGurk has never led an embassy and or any large organization and because McGurk was a key part of the failed SOFA negotiations to extend the U.S. troop presence in Iraq beyond 2011.

There are also concerns on Capitol Hill that McGurk may be too close to Prime Minister **Nouri al-Maliki**, impairing his ability to work with all segments of Iraq's political society. When he was nominated, **Waheed Al Sammarraie**, the D.C. representative of the office of former Iraqi Prime Minister **Ayad Allawi**, the leader of the opposition, wrote a letter to Congress that said, "I would like to inform you that Aliraqia Bloc and the liberal trend will not deal with new assigned ambassador to Iraq Mr. Brett McGurk for his loyalty and bounds with the Islamic party."

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