

THE NEVERENDING SAGA OF LURITA DOAN

Lurita Doan's lawyer, Michael Nardotti, has responded to the OSC report condemning Doan's politicization of the GSA. It's one of those reports that read like a lawyer threw a bunch of stuff at the wall in the hopes that some of it will stick: he blames Henry Waxman for tainting OSC's witnesses, he shifts the focus away from Doan's description of employees as inferior toward one claiming bias, and he claims that, when Doan asked "how can GSA help our candidates?" she addressed it exclusively to Scott Jennings, not any of her subordinates.

Of course, Doan claims she can't remember saying such a thing (so I do wonder how Nardotti can be so sure, since there are so many witnesses who believe otherwise). But in a misguided attempt to prove that Doan's characterization of her statement—that she was making a very specific comment about getting Bush to attend the opening of the SF Federal Building—was correct, Nardotti provides the following email.

Lurita, thanks for expressing my (and I'm sure other RA's) exasperation (during today's call) in not getting the WH to recognize all the good GSA does around the country for the Nation's taxpayer and federal agencies and that we are successful as we are because we are following the President's agenda. He and his Administration are NOT getting proper recognition for this IMHO.

See, the overwhelming bulk of the testimony suggests that the only discussion of the SFFB came after Doan's question—after she asked how to help candidates. And not only does this email not support Doan's claims, but it shows the thinking of the first GSA employee who responded to Doan's question about helping candidates. He responded by thanking Doan for presenting GSA

activities as an outcome of Bush's agenda. And he goes on to complain that Bush doesn't get credit for the accomplishments of GSA.

How does this help Doan combat the claim that her question was perceived to be a request for ideas on how to use GSA to political advantage?

The Ongoing Saga of the Liberated OSC Report

The other interesting tidbit from this exchange was more details on the liberated OSC report. As I reported last weekend (when you were all taking a long weekend with family—and therefore not blogging, and I was taking a long weekend with Jane—and therefore blogging up a storm), it appears that an early, harsher version of the report against Doan was liberated so the press could know that, at one time, OSC strongly recommended that Bush fire Doan.

Well a letter exchange between Bloch and Doan's lawyer—particularly this response from Doan's lawyer—suggests how that liberation may have happened. In an earlier letter, Scott Bloch had explained that, "someone from GSA had received OSC's report to your client from your client and then faxed it and then faxed it to the press." Nardotti disputes this claim entirely:

it is absurd to claim that Administrator Doan released this extremely damaging report herself or through someone else at GSA for any reason, and she strongly denies your charge of a "ruse". The damage done to Administrator Doan by the public release of the report in any form—without mitigating effect of a meaningful response—cannot be undone. To compound the possible injury to the Administrator, the report was leaked to at least three major media outlets, none of which has shown any bias in Administrator Doan's favor.