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Minutes from the Special Agents Advisory Committee (SAAC)
Executive Council Meeting, 09/27/2004 - 09/30/2004,

FBI Headquarters

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The following information was provided by each speaker:

1) Mr. Joseph L Ford; Assistant Director (AD), Finance Division:

*The Council was provided documents outlining the cost of a proposal, projecting the cost of enacting an accelerated advancement of Special Agent to GS-13 in three years, supported by the SAAC, for the following seven high cost offices: Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, Newark, San Francisco and Washington. This document indicated that the implementation of such a program would cost \$48,072,410 for the next 6 years. Details of the projected Agent numbers and cost per office were provide. AD Ford noted that these costs would be in addition to a projected unfunded total requirement for fiscal year (FY) 2005 of \$312,200,000. (Note actual total increase for this program for fiscal year 2005 would be 0. Amount for year 2 would be \$5,773,465. This would be for all affected offices. That amount would then increase each following year.) AD Ford indicated that movement of funds would be necessary but he saw this program as possible if the Director chose to enact it. The Office of Personnel and Management (OPM) would still have to approve the grade increase.

*AD Ford indicated that the FY 2005 budget was projected to be \$5.9 billion; \$3.2 billion of that is slated for personnel cost. Of the remaining funds, approximately 90% goes to FBIHQ, 10% goes to the field. He anticipated a continuing resolution into 2005. This should be at the projected funding so there should not be any FBIHQ excuses for lack of funds based on the continuing resolution. The president asked for a 1.5% pay increase and a projected employees pay increase of 3.5%. The additional 2% is not funded and must come out of the agencies budget. AD Ford projects that in FY 05 clerical support hires will increase by 200 persons.

* AD Ford is trying to instill better money management.

* The discretion of spending the money within the budget mostly rest with Headquarters.

* The finance division has a web page set up which shows the break down of the money within the budget.

*DOJ guidelines outline the rules governing FBI overtime. For every \$1.00 spent on overtime, the hiring of support employees are affected.

* AD Ford noted funding in the following areas for FY 05:

1) \$10 million for rotational transfers and PRLs

2) Funds for blackberries to replace cell phones and pagers as well as supply wireless internet. (For Agents, JTTF & Safe Streets TF). This is anticipated to be distributed by end of calender 05. (Note: this information was supported by information provided by Zal Azmi, Chief Information Officer)

2) Supervisory Special Agent, Transfer Unit:

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*To date there have been 169 PRLs provided by the Unit. This is approximately 15 more

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than last year. The units goal is to have at least 100 PRLs per year, SSA [redacted] opinion is that the rotational transfers will increase PRLs to small and medium sized offices.

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*Overseas TDYs are having adequate responses but CTD TDY's are not receiving adequate response on a volunteer basis. There are other options being reviewed in an effort to identify a better means of providing coverage to CTD than through mandatory TDY's. SSA [redacted] noted that in the Intranet, under library, go to Jobs and all TDYs are listed.

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*SSA [redacted] informed the Council that there is an EC in draft form concerning rotational transfers, some proposals to this EC are as follows:

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- 1) The policy proposed by this draft EC calls for rotational transfers to begin in April '05.
- 2) Agents would be subject to rotational transfer on their third anniversary.
- 3) Rotations would be to one of the top 15 field offices, measured by TSL.
- 4) 60 days prior to your third anniversary, Agents will be asked to rank their choices of top 15 field offices. Needs of the Bureau will trump personal choice.
- 5) After four years in your top office, you would be eligible for a PRL transfer.
- 6) Transfers will be to Headquarters City for the top 15 offices and can be amended for orders to an RA anywhere in the Division. The orders must be amended prior to their arrival.
- 7) RAs within 50 miles of Headquarters City are within purview of the SAC on Agent placement. Anything over 50 miles requires an EC from the field office in order to justify the transfer, since this will be a cost transfer. The Transfer Unit reviews these on a case by case basis.

This is a proposed policy only, also being considered are:

- * Making the fourth year as the rotational transfer trigger date.
- * Making rotational transfers to the top 10-12 rather than the top 15 offices.

- * There are currently 307 CTD TDYs.
- * The Director is currently pondering requests for same sex common household transfers.
- * Hardship Transfers - any and all will be determined on a case by case basis

3) [redacted] **Ombudsman, Office of the Ombudsman:**

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- * Agents are encouraged to visit the SAAC website for an update on pending issues.
- * The FBI is working on creating a universal building pass which would allow Agents/Support to move throughout the entire FBI.
- * The SAAC requested that the by laws be changed to allow for more flexibility when sending SAAC representatives to meetings and allowing the SAAC representative to proxy in another Agent when the representatives are unavailable.

*An all Advisory Committee Symposium has been scheduled for March 19, 2005 at the JW Marriott Hotel, Washington DC.

*The SAAC will follow up with pending issues through the office of the Ombudsman.

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4) [redacted] Supervisory Special Agent, Investigative Law Unit, Office of the General Council:

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*SSA [redacted] indicated that a review of the present evidence custody sign in and out process has been reviewed. The proposed changes and or concerns voiced by SAAC regarding the lack of an acceptance of custody when an evidentiary item is turned in is of concern and OGC has no conflict with the proposal of reinstating a sign in and out process.

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5) [redacted] Unit Chief, Automated Case Support Unit, and Ms. Gail Scavongelli; Section Chief, Systems Support Section, Information Technology Operations Division:

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*A request for information was released to vendors for information pertaining to processes to work on modifying VCF.

* [redacted] Scavongelli provided information on Web-ACS (WACS). This information identified some of the most commonly used functions of ACS that are now available via a web browser. WACS has been available since Sept 03. To access the WACS application Agents should go to the Intranet, click Applications (under Resources in navigation pane on left), and then choose Web based Automated Case Support. All IMA's (Rotors) and support supervisors should be aware of the system. It allows several changes in how searches are conducted. One of the most timely is the simultaneous search of telephone applications and UNI. The application also allows an easy review of leads. The process appears to be easier than traditional multi locations searches. For more information about WACS, and what's in it for you, contact UC [redacted] via email or by phone at [redacted].

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6) Mrs. Candice M Will; Assistant Director, Office of Professional Responsibility:

*Information was provided which noted the change in how OPR matters are handled, noting that OPR is now responsible only for the adjudication of disciplinary matters. Investigation of allegations is now conducted by Inspections Division. AD Will also noted that the OIG has the right of first refusal on internal investigations. In response to a question about the length of time that internal investigations are pending, AD Will stated that OPR does not currently have any matters that have been pending in OPR for a lengthy period of time. AD Will noted that, generally speaking, cases will be pending longer in the Inspection Division, due to the nature of investigations, than they will be in OPR, given that OPR now only adjudicates disciplinary matters.

* An upcoming EC will be published regarding the new OPR procedure and penalties.

7) Mrs. Cassandra Chandler; Assistant Director, Office of Public Affairs:

*After the Presidential elections, there will be a big push to improve the public image of the FBI. This is being put off until after the election in order to avoid making the effort a political subject.

*The FBI media representatives and the community outreach representatives are working

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together to get positive FBI information out to the public.

*Public Relation videos portraying a positive FBI image are in the process of being completed. Council members were allowed a preview of the new video and it was a significant improvement.

*ASAC's/SAC's are provided talking points to present to the media during high profile cases.

8) [redacted] Unit Chief; Senior Executive Service Unit (SESU) [redacted]
[redacted] Acting Unit Chief; Special Agent Mid-Level Management Unit (SAMMU):

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*The new interim Special Agent Mid-Management Selection System has been implemented. Under the interim SAMMSS, passing the Leadership Skills Assessment (LSA) will not be required in order to apply for any mid-level management position. However, as the LSA will eventually be utilized as some or all of the initial hurdle into the SAMMSS, EDSP participants must have taken the LSA prior to applying for GS-14 and non-ASAC GS-15 mid-level management positions. The FD-954 is being utilized for mid-level management positions. The FD-954 is seen as far superior in collecting correct background information on each candidate and setting forth a candidate's knowledge, skills, and abilities with respect to posted qualifications. It is the responsibility of the candidate to assure that the FD-954 can be verified. Current contact information, for any verifier the candidate chooses to utilize, must be included in the FD-954. This may entail maintaining contact with retired supervisors so a candidate can provide such contact information.

*The LSA is still offered every month so individuals wishing to take the test have access. The SAMMU is currently providing oral feedback to those who take the LSA and also plans to provide a written feedback report to all who take the LSA,

* A working group is being formed to help advise the FBI as to a final initial screening mechanism or set of mechanisms to be utilized as an hurdle to apply for mid-level management positions. It is hoped by FBIHQ that pilot testing will take place by spring or summer of 05. The goal is to have the final system in place in 2006.

* FBIHQ continues to work on the steps necessary to implement field SSA term limits and the corresponding alternate career path for a stationary supervisory advancement. The specifics as to how the alternate career path will operate still need to be determined.

*EDSP/SAMMU has a website on the intranet with a full background regarding promotion process and submissions. The site specifically outlines how to complete the FD 954 and all the other information candidates should be familiar with.

9) Mr. Frankie Battle; Section Chief, Response Section, Counterterrorism Division:

*A review was made of the points brought up by the SAAC Lesson Learned paper regarding overseas deployment. Specific instances of failures on TDY assignments to have the proper briefing, coordination and equipment were outlined. It was stressed that Agents desired

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adequate training, coordination and equipment for deployments and that we as an organization should learn lessons from each deployment and not routinely make the same mistakes that have been noted in the past.

*SC Battle presented information regarding overseas deployments. Indicated that there is now in place a 5 day briefing for everyone going into an overseas assignment (Afghanistan/Iraq). This includes 2 days of medical training before deployment. It is now required that all overseas deployments must receive the 2 week State Department training before deploying. This is mandatory starting in FY05. A program taught by FBI at Quantico is in the process of seeking certification so we can teach our own.

*EAP has gotten involved in debriefing employees who have been deployed overseas.

10) [REDACTED] Office of the General Counsel, Administrative Law Unit,
Administrative Services Division:

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*The Director is in the final stages of approving retirement credentials for FBI employees.

*HR bill 218 was passed, allowing qualified retired law enforcement officers to carry a firearm throughout the United States.

*HR bill 218 does not mandate any Agency to issue retired law enforcement identification.

*The SAAC requested through the Office of the Ombudsman to be part of the retired credential committee.

11) [REDACTED] Chief Inspector, Inspection Division:

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*Inspections are moving away from a sample based inspection process towards a more full file review style of inspection. The new evaluation system is looking to set up a better way to evaluate the Agent. It is not being set up for other means, such as a way to terminate employment.

*A new survey is being implemented which will try and determine morale issues. Inspections wants to implement this to all divisions simultaneously to gauge moral and then compare that outcome to the performance observed in that division.

*There will be no more findings of E & E (Effective & Efficient) or I & I (Ineffective & Inefficient) on the inspection process. Individuals will be written as having a deficiency not be given a label referring to performance.

*An attempt will be made to identify Agents who are marginal performers. Marginal performers must be told before the inspection process and it must not have a adverse affect on their career. There is no target number for how many individuals would be marginal performers.

*During a three year window, items such as OPR's, EEO's and Inspection deficiencies may only be part of an Agents evaluation process.

*The SAAC suggested that an SA must be told before the inspection process if they are categorized a marginal performer and the SA must be able to challenge this process.

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12) Mr. Chris Swecker; Assistant Director, Criminal Investigative Division:

*An initiative has been set up to establish a Middle Eastern Criminal Program.

*A number of high profile cases involving informant problems, has made DOJ clamp down on FBI informant guidelines.

*AD Swecker requested that the SAAC come up with a number of suggestions to improve the Confidential Informant guidelines. The SAAC provided a number of written suggestions to AD Swecker.

*The Inspector General's Office has been discussing with the FBI the possibility of obtaining Cooperating Witness (CW) and Confidential Informant (CI) files. No decision has been made on this matter.

*The Criminal Division is attempting to identify criminal enterprises around the country.

*During new Agents training, Quantico is offering more CI/CW training.

13) Unit Chief, Staffing Unit, Human Resource Management:

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*Quick Hire - This fiscal year was a unusual hiring year, due to the intense focus on hiring of IA's. Many applicants were being pushed through in order to complete the process. The quick hire process is being evaluated. The Council noted the problem in the field with the process and the large quantity of unproductive background work done by field Agents on candidates that do not meet a specific entry threshold which has not been determined through basic interviews and records checks.

14) Mr. Zaf Azmi; Chief Information Officer (CIO)

*The Clinger-Cohen ACT of 1996 formalized the role of the CIO and required that each organization has a CIO to assure that information technology is managed as an investment. CIO Azmi is to take care of the oversight of the Information Technology investment, process, development and obtaining of new technology, and employee staffing and training to support the IT needs of the FBI.

*CIO Azmi noted that some of the new technologies that can help the organization are new and innovative. The FBI is moving towards the combination of cell phone and pager functions to issue blackberry's in the near future. This will ad e-mail and eventually direct access to applications and real-time information through these devices.

*Trilogy - CIO Azmi noted that Trilogy was a three prong approach. The first two components have been successful and are in place. The third component is VCF. This process has not been successful and because of continues changes to the requirements and vendor's ability to manage the process. Last June, the Director authorized a two track corrective action plan. Track One, also known as Initial Operating Capability (IOC), will test the VCF's automated workflow process. Beginning in mid-January a small group of users, one or two offices will use the IOC as their document routing system. Employees will create electronic documents such as 302s and EC on standard FBI forms as they currently do, but instead of carrying paper copies to the supervisor's in-box, and then onto other levels for approvals, employees will conduct this process electronically.

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*CIO Azmi notes that there has been an entire change of the IT management team. He now has a program management component, a technology development component, a policy and planning component, a operation component, and also a new senior agent component. This last group is an active participant in defining all user requirements and reviewing the implementation of those requirement to ensure that the IT staff are delivering services and products that are required/requested by the users. This group is a mixed bag of Agents and Intelligence Analysts who have a great deal of field experience and technical expertise.

*Currently the FBI is rating very poorly on the governments evaluation of computer security. FBI is actively working with DOJ to ensure that our processes are on track for 2005. By the end of 2005 CIO Azmi states that he wants to have 10,000 internet connections on line Bureau wide to assist in gaining access to wanted and needed resources, of course this number is dependent on the availability of funds.

*The enterprise operation center (Help desk) is being revamped to provide 24hr, seven day a week support to all FBI employees and systems users.

Additional SAAC matters which were address during the meetings:

1) Upon retirement of SAAC Co-Chair SA [redacted] Baltimore, the SAAC Executive Council voted SA [redacted] SAAC, NYO, to be the new Co-Chair.

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2) An effort would be put forth by the SAAC and the Ombudsman Office to follow-up on presented issues.

3) The SAAC would assist the Ombudsman's Office in the preparation of the Advisory Committee Symposium, scheduled for March 2005.

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