



# UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE EASTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA

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**CHUCK ROSENBERG, UNITED STATES ATTORNEY**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**January 22, 2007**

Jim Rybicki  
Public Information Officer  
Phone: (703) 842-4050 Fax: (703) 549-5202  
E-Mail: [usavae.press@usdoj.gov](mailto:usavae.press@usdoj.gov)  
Website: [www.usdoj.gov/usao/vae](http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/vae)

## **Former State Department Official Sentenced for Mishandling Classified Material**

(Alexandria, VA) – Donald Willis Keyser, age 63, of Fairfax Station, Virginia, was sentenced today to 12 months and one day in prison, payment of a \$25,000 fine, and three years of supervised release for the unlawful removal of classified material from the Department of State, and for making false statements to the government. Chuck Rosenberg, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, made the announcement after sentencing by United States District Judge T.S. Ellis, III.

On December 12, 2005, Keyser pled guilty to a three-count Criminal Information in which he admitted that he willfully and unlawfully removed classified documents and digital memory devices from the Department of State to his residence. Keyser also admitted that he lied to an investigator from the Bureau of Diplomatic Security at the Department of State about his relationship with Isabelle Cheng, an intelligence officer of Taiwan, by falsely denying that he had engaged in conduct with Cheng which might make him vulnerable to coercion, exploitation, or pressure from a foreign government. Keyser further admitted that he lied on a U.S. Customs Declaration in 2003 by not listing Taiwan as a country that he had visited, when in fact he had traveled to Taiwan for approximately three days and had met there with Cheng.

United States Attorney Chuck Rosenberg stated, "Mr. Keyser had an absolute obligation to safeguard the classified information entrusted to him and utterly failed to do so. His sentence of imprisonment is a warning to others in positions of public trust."

According to court documents, during a search of Keyser's home on September 4, 2004, FBI agents discovered 3,559 classified documents in hard-copy form, including documents containing information originated by the U.S. Department of State, National Security Agency, Central Intelligence Agency, and Defense Intelligence Agency. These documents included 28

documents classified at the Top Secret Level, including National Intelligence Estimates and other documents containing Sensitive Compartmented Information.

The FBI also found numerous floppy disks in Keyser's home that contained classified information, 100 of which were classified at the Secret level. Approximately 40 classified documents were found on the hard drive of Keyser's personal computer. In addition to unauthorized possession of classified digital information at home, Keyser took a classified disk with him to Asia in 2003 and accessed it from his personal laptop computer.

The case was investigated by the FBI's Washington Field Office and the Bureau of Diplomatic Security. The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys David H. Laufman and Patricia M. Haynes and Clifford I. Rones, a Trial Attorney with the Counterespionage Section of the Department of Justice.

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