

HAS DICK CHENEY OUTLASTED BILL LEONARD?

Bill Leonard is resigning at the end of the year.

It is with deeply mixed emotions that I inform you I have decided to leave government service at the end of the calendar year.

[snip]

I will miss all the great public servants at the National Archives as I move on to the next phase of my professional life. Nonetheless, I look forward to new opportunities to serve this great nation and the American people.

Leonard, of course, is the guy who took on Dick Cheney's creative theories about classification and declassification. As Secrecy News notes,

In pursuit of that integrity earlier this year, Mr. Leonard famously challenged the Office of the Vice President, which decided in 2003 that it would no longer submit to longstanding classification oversight procedures.

After the Federation of American Scientists filed a formal complaint concerning the OVP's non-compliance, Mr. Leonard urged Cheney aide David Addington to reconsider its position. When Addington ignored the request, Mr. Leonard exercised his authority to raise the issue with the Attorney General, who is obliged by the executive order on classification to render an interpretation of the order's requirements.

Although no response from the Attorney General was forthcoming, the episode returned the Vice President and his unchecked secrecy into an object of public ridicule. (See "Vice President Makes Secrecy Policy a Joke (Literally)," Secrecy News, June 26, 2007).

Mr. Leonard's unexpected resignation naturally invites speculation that the friction between him and the Office of Vice President was a factor in his departure. However, his associates say there is no specific evidence of that.

Perhaps we ought to make a concerted effort to get a ruling on whether Dick is a Fourth Branch before Leonard leaves?