

## **Blankenship should stay out of our Business**

As a Bahamian, I was extremely irritated by the article in the Friday, September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2006 Tribune. It was one of the most egregious examples of meddling in the internal affairs of The Bahamas that I have ever read.

There, on page three, former United States' Ambassador to The Bahamas, Mr. J. Richard Blankenship, decided to expound on the part he believes the Hon. Allyson Maynard Gibson, Attorney General of The Bahamas, played in the recent extradition of Samuel Knowles to the United States. His remarks regarding not only Bahamian policy, but Bahamian politics, as quoted by the Tribune, are beyond inappropriate.

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Mr. Blankenship's bully tactics, so detrimental to him and to the country he represented while Ambassador, are once again very much in evidence as he declares that the Hon. Allyson Maynard Gibson has "set the stage for her becoming Deputy Prime Minister." He further declares that the Attorney General has, in his opinion, "emerged as a possible future Prime Minister."

Mr. Blankenship should be aware, as a former Ambassador and as someone who professes to know The Bahamas well, that it is not his business, nor anyone else's, to be commenting on an ongoing court case. Neither is it his business to be offering suggestions and predictions on the internal politics of the nation and

the governance and security of the country and its people. To do so, as he has done, is a serious breach of international protocol.

His comments on Minister Maynard Gibson's future political position are as out of place as would be those of a Bahamian official on the political future of Vice President Cheney or Secretary of State Rice. In fact, if a former Bahamian Ambassador to the United States had made similar comments on internal U.S. affairs or Republican policy structure in a U.S. daily newspaper, it would be no less inappropriate and unthinkable.

Although Mr. Blankenship's current comments do nothing to promote the interests of the United States in The Bahamas, if truth be told, his remarks may provide an interesting and revealing glimpse of how those who are close to the Bush administration regard the sovereignty of The Bahamas.

Today in The Bahamas we have an Ambassador from the United States, H.E. John Rood, who should be allowed to continue the fine job he is doing without any interference from someone whose questionable and controversial performance here in the same capacity left some Bahamians wondering just who our friends really were.

I am offended by Mr. Blankenship's cavalier attitude towards The Bahamas, its government and its politics. I know that I am not alone in this response to Mr.

Blankenship's remarks. I would ask him to remember that, although The Bahamas is a small nation, the United States - and those who purport to speak for her - should not feel they can assume authority in our sovereign nation where they have none and make sweeping statements about our internal matters where they have no jurisdiction. We may be small, but the United States would be hard-pressed to find a better friend in the community of nations. I would not like to see the thoughtless, irresponsible remarks of Mr. Blankenship damage that very special longstanding relationship.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Philip C. Galanis". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Senator Philip C. Galanis