

VOA charges with pro-Iranian slant

by UPI

WASHINGTON -- The nomination of a top diplomatic official is on hold in the Senate over charges of pro-Iranian bias in Voice of America's Persian broadcasts, lawmakers said. James Glassman is slated to succeed Karen Hughes for the top public diplomatic office in the Bush administration, but Sen. Tom Coburn, R-Okla., held up the nomination process in the Senate while awaiting transcripts of VOA's Farsi-language broadcasts, The Washington Times reported Monday. Coburn issued his request to the Broadcasting Board of Governors, or BBG, of which Glassman is the chairman. Coburn is using the nomination hearing to grill Glassman because of the failure to secure all the requested transcripts. Coburn said anti-American content made its way into VOA broadcasts and claims the programs gave too much time to pro-Iranian guests and commentators. VOA Director Danforth Austin denied the allegations in a statement, saying all programming is "accurate, objective and comprehensive," adding, VOA "presents the policies of the United States, including responsible discussions and opinion on these policies." Al-Hurra, an Arabic television channel sponsored by the U.S. government, received criticism in 2007 when it broadcast entire speeches by the leaders of Hezbollah and Hamas.

Copyright © 2008, by United Press International. All Rights Reserved.

VOA charges with pro-Iranian slant by UPI