

Gates Faces 'Bumpy' Beginning At CIA, Ex-Official Inman Says

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Former CIA deputy director retired Adm. Bobby Ray Inman said yesterday that Robert M. Gates faces "a bumpy few months" at the agency if the Senate confirms him as director of central intelligence.

A strong supporter of Gates, Inman, who was No. 2 at the agency in 1981-82, said Gates was "an extraordinarily hard taskmaster" whose appointment as CIA director will be complicated at the beginning both by the need to reorient the intelligence community "to the reality of an incredibly changing world" and apprehensions on the part of many intelligence officials of what this will mean for their careers.

Testifying at Gates's confirmation hearings before the Senate intelligence committee, Inman said he based his remarks on talks he has had with a variety of CIA personnel about Gates, a career analyst who was deputy director under William J. Casey and William H. Webster.

"The very bright younger ones are eager to see him return," Inman said of Gates. "There's substantial apprehension at other levels that he will move too fast, too swiftly and too brutally for their careers."

Providing U.S. policymakers with reliable intelligence also could prove an increasingly difficult task, Inman said. He said "the next six to nine months are going to be extraordinarily turbulent" in world affairs, especially in the Middle East and the Soviet Union.

Committee Chairman David L. Boren (D-Okla.) said the panel still has to determine whether Gates is ready to take over the leadership of the CIA and the intelligence community, observing that Gates "has been in a sense a quintessential staff man" for his entire career.

Inman acknowledged that Gates, 47, has moved up the ladder so quickly that he did not have much time to develop "skills for managing



BY RAY LUETIG—THE WASHINGTON POST
Before Gates hearing, Inman, second from right, confers with Sens. William S. Cohen (R-Maine), left, Warren B. Rudman (R-N.H.) and John Glenn (D-Ohio).

people."

"He broke some china," Inman acknowledged, but added, "he's older . . . he's clearly grown in the successive jobs he's had."

By Gates's account, changing the CIA will be a top priority for him. "CIA and U.S. intelligence must change, and be seen to change, or confront irrelevance and growing sentiment for their dismantlement," he said in testimony earlier this week.

If confirmed, Gates said he would ask President Bush and senior security advisers for a major study of intelligence needs "to the year 2005." Saying he would like the effort completed by the end of the year, in time for the next budget cycle, Gates emphasized a need to "dramatically expand our clandestine human intelligence collection effort" while decreasing paramilitary covert actions.

Other requirements, he said, include streamlining what is now "a 19th century system" of distributing intelligence. Asked what he had in mind, he implied putting the CIA in real-time competition with CNN so that the CIA does not get scooped as frequently. "We have not, frankly, taken sufficiently into account in the intelligence business the arrival on the scene of CNN and other 24-hour-a-day news broadcasting systems and, as a result, I think much of our current intelligence is in fact old news by the time

it reaches many of the policy-makers," Gates said.

The answer, he said, is to give the policymakers "monitors" where throughout the day, intelligence would be updated for them on situations all around the world and where it would be integrated so there could be maps and photographs and so on." He said this idea was turned down in the mid-1980s.

Another modernization he talked about, which also was rejected in the past, would be to include from CIA stations overseas items that agents "pick up on the cocktail circuit, the gossip that they hear" and introduce that material into intelligence reports before they "get down to serious business." Gates said such material would "clarify and give a liveliness to our reporting."

Gates, who is deputy national security adviser to Bush, is still dogged by questions over the extent of his knowledge of crucial aspects of the Iran-contra scandal and charges that he presided over a "politicization" of intelligence reports—in effect, telling policymakers what they want to hear.

Inman, the only witness at yesterday's hearing, said he spotted Gates in 1981 as a potential CIA director and, with the help of the late John A. Bross Sr., an old Casey friend and adviser, persuaded Casey to make Gates deputy director for intelligence. Actually, Inman said he felt Gates should have been appointed assistant deputy at first, because of a lack of managerial experience, but Casey surprised him by putting Gates in charge of the directorate.

Inman said this caused "bruised feelings" on the part of others. He also said there has been "a good deal of rivalry" between Gates and officials in the CIA's directorate of covert operations. Gates, Inman said, was "frequently critical of actions" by the operations directorate, either for not providing information or "embarrassing the agency."

In fact, Inman said, if the new world order was one in which covert operations were the primary requirement, he would not be recommending Gates as the best candidate.

As for what Gates knew about the Iran-contra affair and when, Inman said he thought it "entirely plausible that [Casey] made a conscious decision to keep Bob Gates out of areas that he thought might be troublesome to protect him for

the prospect of his future progress."

Boren asked if it was "believable" that Casey "never really informed" Gates about either the diversion to the Nicaraguan contra resupply operation of profits from arms sales to Iran or other aspects of the scandal.

"I think it is probable that he did not tell him—not possible—probably did not tell him," Inman replied.

The hearings are due to resume Tuesday with testimony from acting CIA Director Richard J. Kerr and senior CIA analyst Charles Allen.