

Senate Confirms Gates as CIA Chief

64-31 Vote Ends Months of Controversy Over Candor With Congress

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and George Lardner Jr.
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The Senate confirmed Robert M. Gates as director of central intelligence yesterday by a vote of 64 to 31, ending nearly six months of controversy over his candor with Congress and his conduct as a high-ranking CIA official in the 1980s.

Now deputy national security adviser at the White House, Gates, who joined the CIA 24 years ago, was named by President Bush last May as the best choice to give the government "the kind of intelligence America needs to maintain its role as leader of the free world." Echoing that theme at his confirmation hearings, Gates has emphasized the painful changes needed in the U.S. intelligence community with the end of the Cold War and increasing budgetary constraints.

But the often bitter battle over his appointment focused on earlier testimony about his role in the Iran-contra scandal and allegations that he slanted intelligence reports at the CIA to suit the Reagan administration's hard-line views of the Soviet Union. Many of the charges came from current or former CIA employees.

The rare nomination of a career CIA officer to the agency's top job took another unusual turn during the Senate floor debate when Gates's strongest supporters as well as his opponents warned him they would be watching closely to see that he takes no retaliatory actions against his critics within the CIA.

Senate intelligence committee Chairman David L. Boren (D-Okla.), who guided the nomination to yesterday's victory, reiterated his pledge during the confirmation hearings that as long as he remains in the Senate, he would "intervene on their behalf at the slightest hint of retribution."

Many of the 21 other Senate Democrats who voted for Gates

said they were supporting him because of his long experience in intelligence and his dedication to the congressional oversight process, a theme that Boren also stressed during the confirmation process. Boren said yesterday that Congress had Gates to thank for its ability to audit secret CIA bank accounts anywhere in the world as well as for Bush's decision not to veto legislation creating an independent inspector general at the agency.

All 42 Republican senators who were present yesterday voted for confirmation. All 31 no votes were cast by Democrats. It was the stiff-

est opposition to the nomination of a CIA director ever recorded. Most nominations to the post have been approved unanimously.

Senate Majority Leader George J. Mitchell (D-Maine), who gave a strong speech opposing Gates, said that if approved, Gates "will owe that confirmation to one person, and one person only, and that is Senator Boren."

Gates had been nominated to head the CIA four years ago by President Ronald Reagan, but withdrew after a series of unsatisfactory answers about the Iran-contra scandal stirred strong bipartisan opposition on the intelligence committee. Boren said yesterday that while Gates was not ready then to be CIA director, he is now.

Yesterday, two senators who were among Gates's most critical interrogators in 1987—Sam Nunn (D-Ga.) and Arlen Specter (R-

How Senators Voted

Associated Press

Here is the 64-31 roll call by which the Senate voted to confirm Robert M. Gates as CIA director.

DEMOCRATS AGAINST

Adams (Wash.), Baucus (Mont.), Biden (Del.), Bingaman (N.M.), Bradley (N.J.), Bumpers (Ark.), Burdick (N.D.), Conrad (N.D.), Daschle (S.D.), DeConcini (Ariz.), Dixon (Ill.), Dodd (Conn.), Exon (Neb.), Fowler (Ga.), Gore (Tenn.), Harkin (Iowa), Hollings (S.C.), Kennedy (Mass.), Kerry (Mass.), Lautenberg (N.J.), Levin (Mich.), Metzenbaum (Ohio), Mitchell (Maine), Moynihan (N.Y.), Pryor (Ark.), Riegle (Mich.), Rockefeller (W.Va.), Sarbanes (Md.), Sasser (Tenn.), Simon (Ill.), Wellstone (Minn.).

DEMOCRATS FOR

Akaka (Hawaii), Bentsen (Tex.), Boren (Okla.), Breaux (La.), Bryan (Nev.), Byrd (W.Va.), Ford (Ky.), Glenn (Ohio), Graham (Fla.), Heflin (Ala.), Inouye (Hawaii), Johnston (La.), Kohl (Wis.), Leahy (Vt.), Lieberman (Conn.), Mikulski (Md.), Nunn (Ga.), Pell (R.I.), Reid (Nev.), Robb (Va.), Sanford (N.C.), Shelby (Ala.).

REPUBLICANS AGAINST

None.

REPUBLICANS FOR

Bond (Mo.), Brown (Colo.), Burns (Mont.), Chafee (R.I.), Coats (Ind.), Cochran (Miss.), Cohen (Maine), Craig (Idaho), D'Amato (N.Y.), Danforth (Mo.), Dole (Kan.), Domenici (N.M.), Durenberger (Minn.), Garn (Utah), Gorton (Wash.), Gramm (Tex.), Grassley (Iowa), Hatfield (Ore.), Helms (N.C.), Jeffords (Vt.), Kassebaum (Kan.), Kasten (Wis.), Lott (Miss.), Lugar (Ind.), Mack (Fla.), McCain (Ariz.), McConnell (Ky.), Murkowski (Alaska), Nickles (Okla.), Packwood (Ore.), Pressler (S.D.), Roth (Del.), Rudman (N.H.), Seymour (Calif.), Simpson (Wyo.), Smith (N.H.), Specter (Pa.), Stevens (Alaska), Symms (Idaho), Thurmond (S.C.), Wallop (Wyo.), Warner (Va.).

DEMOCRATS NOT VOTING

Cranston (Calif.), Kerrey (Neb.), Wirth (Colo.), Wofford (Pa.).

REPUBLICANS NOT VOTING

Hatch (Utah).

Pa.)—also voted for the nomination.

Nunn, who had warned he might vote against Gates on the Senate floor, made a brief statement in support of the nominee in the final hour of the debate. He said that although he still was concerned about the signal Gates's confirmation would send to CIA employees, the prime factor in his decision was the nominee's knowledge of the information policymakers need and his pledges to make significant changes in the way intelligence analysis is done.

Nunn had told reporters earlier in the day that he was voting for Gates even though "there are real questions about whether he's the right person for the job." Asked why he was voting for Gates if he felt that way, Nunn said: "The president appointed him, and I don't find anything to disqualify him."

For many senators, the debate over Gates came down to whether the president's nominee should get the benefit of any doubts, especially for a sensitive office such as CIA director. Sen. Joseph I. Lieberman (D-Conn.), who supported Gates, maintained that the question facing senators was "not is he the best person to fill the job, but having been nominated by the president, is he qualified?"

Sen. Paul S. Sarbanes (D-Md.), who voted against Gates, complained that most senators seemed to think that the presumption should be in favor of a nominee and "the burden is on the Senate to disqualify him." In fact, Sarbanes said, "it's almost reached the point that unless a nominee is mentally certifiable or criminally indictable, we're supposed to support the president's nominee."

Many Senate critics of the nomination emphasized Gates's frequent failure to recall events in the Iran-contra affair, which involved the secret sale of U.S. arms to Iran and the diversion of profits to covert efforts to supply the contra

rebels in Nicaragua. Sen. Wyche Fowler Jr. (D-Ga.) made one of the strongest statements attacking the nominee's veracity, noting a contrast between Gates's testimony before the House intelligence subcommittee that Fowler chaired in the early 1980s and the recent Senate confirmation hearings.

"The Robert Gates I knew [from the House hearings] prided himself in his extraordinary memory. That Robert Gates made us all believers in his memory," Fowler said, adding that he found Gates's recent testimony marked by numerous memory lapses not credible.