

Spy vs. Spy: 4 CIA Veterans Criticize, Defend Gates

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Four veteran CIA intelligence analysts stepped into the limelight of a Senate hearing room yesterday to quarrel fiercely over whether Robert M. Gates has the integrity and objectivity to oversee the na-

tion's intelligence community, revealing in the process a normally secret bureaucratic world of sometimes bitter division and frequent infighting.

The session was damaging not only for Gates but also for the CIA, providing an unprecedented public airing of the political maneuvering that lay behind a series of highly classified intelligence reports in the 1980s, some of which landed on the president's desk.

Two of the witnesses who ap-

peared before the Senate intelligence committee were sharply critical of Gates and two were supportive of him. One of the defenders, Graham Fuller, a former national intelligence officer for the Near East, said after the hearing ended: "There's a lot of blood on the floor. It dismays me."

The dramatic highlight of the day came from Harold P. Ford, a retired intelligence officer who joined the CIA almost at its birth and said he was torn by conflicting loyalties to the agency and to Gates. Presenting his remarks in almost grandfatherly fashion before a bank of attentive senators, Ford told a hushed room that Gates does not deserve to be confirmed as director of central intelligence.

Testifying in somber tones, Ford, a former Gates colleague and recipient of numerous awards from the

agency, said that Gates's own testimony in recent weeks helped persuade him to take the "painful task" of opposing the nomination. Ford questioned Gates's candor, asserted that Gates had clearly "skewed intelligence" at times and voiced serious doubts about the nominee's "analytical judgment" and independence of mind.

"I'm sorry to say it, but the word that for me captures this latter testimony of his is 'clever,'" Ford said, alluding to Gates's faint recollections last month of his role in the Iran-contra scandal. "The forgetfulness of this brilliant officer—gifted with photographic memory—does not, to me, instill confidence."

Committee chairman David L. Boren (D-Okla.), noting that Gates will be called back at a final session to respond to the allegations of distorting intelligence and stifling dis-



HAROLD P. FORD
... Gates "skewed intelligence"

■ CIA bureaucrats even some old scores at Senate hearings. Page A14.

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Four CIA Veterans Criticize, Defend Gates at Hearing

GATES, From A1

sent that have cropped up since the hearings began two weeks ago, said the nomination "may all come down to his answers to the questions . . . in terms of what he answers—the substance of it—and how he answers . . . how he handles himself," Boren said. "The question is whether or not he is mature enough."

In 1987, when Gates was first nominated as CIA director but subsequently withdrew, Boren said he did not think Gates was ready for the job. "Whether or not he's the same person he was five years ago . . . we will have to make a judgment," Boren said, adding that such a judgment will depend on Gates's "ability to clear up troubling questions and how convincing he is in doing so."

Today the committee is scheduled to continue hearing testimony on allegations that Gates, in his tenure as a high-ranking CIA official in the 1980s, corrupted the intelligence process at CIA, tailoring analysis to suit the hard-line views of agency director William J. Casey and the Reagan White House and suppressing dissenting opinions.

In support of Gates, Fuller praised him as an "immensely intelligent" official with "a superb grasp of substance" and sharply disputed the charges that Gates had politicized intelligence.

"I think Bob Gates is too intelligent for that, for there is no quicker death for an intelligence officer than willful manipulation and distortion of facts," Fuller said.

Fuller and Lawrence K. Gershwin, currently the CIA's national intelligence officer for strategic programs, both suggested that the complaints about Gates have come

largely from frustrated analysts who did not thrive under his tenure in the 1980s first as head of the intelligence directorate and later as the agency's second-in-command. The business of producing national intelligence estimates as a guide for U.S. foreign policy "is not a game for kids," Fuller said.

The leadoff witness, Melvin A. Goodman, former chief of the CIA intelligence directorate's Soviet-Third World division, emphasized to the committee that there were "two primary targets for politicization" in the early 1980s, both of them matters that Casey cared most deeply about.

The first target, Goodman said, were "nearly all intelligence issues connected to covert action," such as CIA activities in Iran, Nicaragua and Afghanistan. The other target, he said, was related to Casey's conviction that the Soviets were the source of all international problems including the attempted assassination of Pope John Paul II in 1981, international terrorism and unrest in the Third World.

"Gates's role," Goodman charged, "was to corrupt the process and the ethics of intelligence on all of these issues. He was Casey's filter in the directorate of intelligence. He protected Casey's equity in these issues."

While Goodman cited specific instances where he said Gates had intervened improperly, the 70-year-old Ford couched his opposition in terms of "the strong tradition among older CIA officers . . . [who were] raised on the need for strict independence of judgment, of a premium on telling it like it is . . ."

"I do not see Bob Gates as a strong exemplar of that tradition," Ford said.

Ford's testimony was particularly striking because he had originally



PHOTOS BY RAY LUSTIG—THE WASHINGTON POST

Harold P. Ford, a longtime CIA officer who changed his mind about backing Gates, talks with former CIA analyst Jennifer Glaudemans at the hearing.

planned to support Gates and had even submitted a prepared statement on behalf of the nominee. But in closed session last week, he told the senators to "tear it up" because he had changed his mind.

Yesterday, Ford began by telling the committee, "I have some very difficult things to say, but I feel I must say them." A longtime intelligence analyst and manager who worked directly under Gates in the mid-80s as vice chairman of the National Intelligence Council, Ford said "Bob Gates was good to me and . . . as an indebted colleague, I should loyally support Bob Gates's candidacy. But I also have loyalties to the agency . . ."

Calling Gates "extremely able," Ford, who still works part-time for the agency under contract, said that discerning the skewing of intelligence is often a tricky business. He said he was satisfied that some of the pressures Gates applied to CIA analysts were justified to make their work sharper and more relevant for policymakers. At other times, he said, complaints were simply the result of professional disagreements and damaged pride.

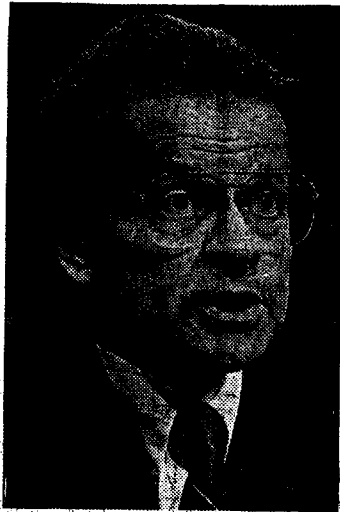
But in other cases, he said, "Bob Gates's pressures have clearly gone

beyond professional bounds and clearly constitute a skewing of intelligence . . . chiefly concerning Soviet political matters and developments concerning the Soviets and the Third World."

Ford, who joined the CIA in 1950 and has known Gates for 10 years, said one skewed estimate was a May 1985 report on the alleged dangers of Soviet inroads in Iran. In that case, Ford said, he was persuaded that Gates had insisted on his own views and discouraged dissent.

The author of that controversial estimate, which was subsequently used to help justify covert U.S. arms shipments to Iran, was Fuller, who sought in his testimony yesterday to defend himself as well as Gates.

A Middle East expert, Fuller acknowledged rejecting the views of the Soviet analysts in the CIA's intelligence directorate and rewriting a draft they had submitted, saying it had been too dismissive of the possibility of Soviet arms sales to Iran. He said he had every right to make such changes as the national intelligence officer in charge of the estimate. He said he told Gates that he had rewritten the work of the



MELVIN A. GOODMAN
... says Gates corrupted intelligence

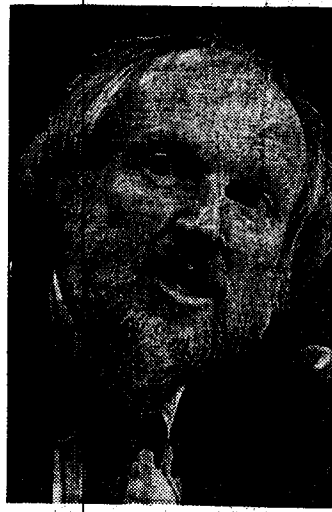
Soviet analysts and Gates concurred.

Fuller said he resented being "portrayed as someone else's instrument," adding that "Gates never told me what to say, never winked at me or otherwise attempted to dictate outcomes of estimates." But in discussing attitudes generally at the CIA, Fuller confirmed there had been a "very, very serious erosion of morale" in the agency's large office of Soviet analysis.

Ford, who said his information came from the confidences of CIA colleagues he respects and from documents recently declassified, testified that Gates evidently "leaned much more heavily" on the younger, more junior analysts in the intelligence directorate rather than the higher-ranking, more seasoned national intelligence officers.

His concerns about Gates's testimony, Ford added, extended to a recently declassified January 1987 session before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee when Gates incorrectly asserted that the dangers of Soviet inroads in Iran were still real. In effect, Gates was at the time defending the administration's arms sales to Iran.

"I fault him seriously on this," Ford said sternly. Directors of central intelligence should be candid with Congress and "not pass off their own earlier preconceptions as present-tense fact."



GRAHAM FULLER
... defends Gates's integrity, ability

At the start of yesterday's session, Boren said the intelligence committee had singled out four areas of alleged slanting of intelligence to explore: the Iran estimate, a study claiming Soviet involvement in the 1981 attempt to kill the pope, a 1986 speech by Gates boosting the Strategic Defense Initiative and a series of inspector general reports about the "widespread perception of politicization" among demoralized Soviet analysts.

But Ford warned the senators that "the skewing of intelligence and the purging of dissident analysts . . . goes considerably beyond the four particular issues this committee happens to be focusing on."

Ford said he has gotten many calls in recent days from past and present CIA operations officers as well as analysts praising him for his decision to oppose Gates. He said the fact that Gates has "scorned the views of others" would not be such a problem if he were not so often wrong about world events.

Gates, Ford said, "has been dead wrong" on the collapse of the Soviet empire, wrong on the Soviet threat to Iran in 1985, "overly certain" that the Soviets were in charge of international terrorism and "overly certain" that the sky would fall if we didn't bomb Nicaragua . . . The U.S.A. deserves a DCI [director of central intelligence] whose analytic batting average is better than that."