

'Very Tough' Questions Await Gates

Sen. Boren Says Panel Won't Vote on Confirmation Until Satisfied

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The chairman of the Senate intelligence committee, David L. Boren (D-Okla.), said yesterday the panel will be "very tough" this week in questioning Robert M. Gates, President Bush's nominee to head the Central Intelligence Agency, and will not vote on the nomination until satisfied with his answers.

Confirmation hearings for Gates will begin today and are expected to last at least until Friday.

Boren and other members of the committee, on various television interview programs, said the Iran-contra scandal and allegations about the "politicization" of intelligence at CIA over the last decade will be the main topics.

"There are a lot of tough questions that are there to be asked," Boren said on ABC's "This Week With David Brinkley." He said he and others on the committee "are not going to vote on this nomination until we've been satisfied with those answers." If it turns out that Gates did not tell "the whole truth" in the past, Boren said "that would disqualify him."

Now Bush's deputy national security adviser, Gates, 47, was first named by President Ronald Reagan in February 1987 to succeed William J. Casey as CIA director, but the nomination collapsed under congressional uncertainty about the extent of Gates's knowledge of the Iran-contra affair.

Although he was No. 2 at the CIA under Casey, and before that deputy director for intelligence, Gates testified then that Casey kept him in the dark about the administration's secret arms sales to Iran and use of profits from those sales to help finance a covert resupply network for the Nicaraguan contras.

Boren said that whoever gets the CIA job "is going to preside over the most sweeping changes in the history of the intelligence community." He said the need for "a new

mission for intelligence" was illustrated by the fact that the CIA still "has half of its assets, very expensive assets, mainly directed at the Soviet military target."

Sen. Sam Nunn (D-Ga.) said on NBC's "Meet the Press" that Gates's confirmation "depends on whether we conclude that he is trustworthy—that's the bottom line." Two other committee members, Sens. Bill Bradley (D-N.J.) and Warren B. Rudman (R-N.H.), agreed on CBS's "Face the Nation" that the outcome will depend on Gates.

Rudman said he has read the voluminous record compiled by the

committee for the hearings and was "less concerned" than he had been a few weeks ago about Gates's chances. Bradley said he intends to pursue questions such as whether Gates had any role in activities in support of Iraq during the Iran-Iraq war that may not have been "fully authorized by law."

Sen. Dennis DeConcini (D-Ariz.) said on CNN's "Newsmaker Sunday" that he was concerned about instances of "cooking the books" or politicizing intelligence reports and voiced frustration over the fact that the committee may have to discuss this entirely behind closed doors because the reports are classified.

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