

CIA Appointee May Face 'Tough Sailing' on Hill

GOP Sen. Domenici Questions Choice of Lake

By R. Jeffrey Smith
Washington Post Staff Writer

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A senior Republican lawmaker said yesterday that some of his colleagues may raise tough questions about President Clinton's selection of his national security adviser, Anthony Lake, to replace John M. Deutch as director of the CIA.

Senate Budget Committee Chairman Pete V. Domenici (R-N.M.) said that of Clinton's four new choices for top foreign policy or national security jobs, the president's pick for the CIA is the one that might be in for "tough sailing" on Capitol Hill.

Domenici, who is not a member of the Select Committee on Intelligence that will have first crack at voting on Lake's nomination, said he thought most senators believed Deutch was "doing a pretty good job" before being "unceremoniously . . . replaced in a kind of in-house coup."

Domenici was joined on CNN's "Late Edition" in raising questions about Lake by former CIA director R. James Woolsey and former secretary of state Lawrence Eagleburger.

Woolsey, who was eased out of his job at the CIA by Clinton in early 1995, said Lake may find it "hard [but] not impossible" to support CIA analysis that reflects poorly on policies Lake had a role in creating while

he was Clinton's top foreign policy adviser.

"Being director of central intelligence is a skunk-at-the-garden-party job," Woolsey said. "You're always telling people things they don't want to hear—sometimes that their policies aren't working." He said Lake's challenge will be "to stand up clearly and reflect . . . the views of the professionals on some issues where he was involved as an architect."

Woolsey's predecessor, Robert M. Gates, faced a similar challenge after he moved in 1991 from the White House, where he was deputy national security adviser, to the CIA. Gates was never criticized as being biased toward the policies he helped create, and many at the agency welcomed his close relationship with President George Bush as a vehicle for ensuring their analysis was heard.

Eagleburger, who has criticized Clinton's other personnel selections for a lack of strategic vision about foreign policy, said he wondered if Lake "is strong enough" to press needed CIA reforms. "I think it's in bad shape," he said of the agency.

White House Chief of Staff Leon E. Panetta on Saturday defended Lake against criticism that he had been eased out of the White House, saying Lake was attracted to the challenge posed by the CIA job when it was first broached to him.