

Gates's Tolerance for Dissent at CIA Seen as Focus of Today's Witnesses

Whether Nominee Suppressed Opposing Views Emerges as Concern

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Several CIA analysts who worked under Robert M. Gates are expected to testify today that Gates often tried to quell dissent when he was deputy director of the agency, according to sources.

The question of whether Gates suppressed opposing views in the CIA has emerged as a central one at his confirmation hearings to be the new director of the CIA. Last week, Gates acknowledged that he persuaded a top State Department official not to dissent from a key 1985 intelligence estimate that later was used to help justify the White House scheme to sell arms to Iran. Yesterday, Richard J. Kerr, the acting director of the CIA, said under questioning from Sen. Howard M. Metzenbaum (D-Ohio) that he did see flaws in the ways a number of key estimates, including the Iran document, were prepared under Gates.

The analysts scheduled to appear today before a closed session of the Senate intelligence committee are expected to try to show that Gates politicized intelligence, a charge also leveled by critics against William J. Casey, Gates' late boss. They are expected to cite specific examples where they allege Gates tried to suppress dissenting views, including the Iran document, intelligence about Soviet-sponsored terrorism and the war in Afghanistan.

They are also expected to say that there was demoralization and an atmosphere of intimidation in the CIA's Soviet analysis division, which included a policy that they could not dissent when they disagreed with estimates produced under Gates.

One former CIA analyst who is not listed to testify today but has met with the committee, said in an interview that some agency ana-

lysts, feeling that Gates would not entertain their arguments, went directly and secretly to counterparts at the State Department, who would work their views into the State Department's position.

"The emphasis came on how do you get it past Gates. How do you package it? What subterfuge do you use to get your votes out?" said the

analyst. The analyst, who still holds a job in the intelligence community, asked not to be identified.

Two of the former CIA analysts who are expected to criticize Gates's leadership in testimony are Melvin A. Goodman, who was a senior Soviet analyst and chief of the Soviet-Third World Division and Jennifer Glaudemans, another Soviet analyst, according to sources who have reviewed their prepared testimony, which is classified. Hal Ford, a veteran analyst who left the agency in the mid-1980s, has submitted testimony that he has no direct knowledge of Gates's attempting to distort the intelligence product, but that he had heard such complaints, sources said.

The intelligence committee has also received a copy of a lengthy December 1986 memo written by Tom Barksdale, the CIA's senior Iran analyst at the time, which criticized the management "ethos" and "perversion of the process" under Casey and Gates that allowed the politicization of intelligence, sources said.

After Barksdale sent his memo to Kerr, then deputy director of the CIA for intelligence, Barksdale was criticized by Gates for his attitude, said one source.

Yesterday, Metzbaum confronted Kerr with a 1987 memo in which, Metzbaum suggested, Kerr criticized Gates's and Casey's leadership.

The memo, entitled "Integrity and Objectivity of National Foreign Intelligence Estimates," talked about the importance of an impartial process and the "full expression of views by participating agencies and the clear identification for our consumers of areas of disagreement.

"It has been our experience that when the NIO [the National Intelligence Officers responsible for the comprehensive intelligence estimates] subordinates this responsibility, to the advocacy of a particular analytic line, that the integrity of the estimative process suffers," Kerr had written.

This was the central criticism of a now-celebrated 1985 Iran estimate, drafted by NIO Graham Fuller, that suggested that the regime of the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini might be faltering. That es-

timate was used to justify the secret U.S. flirtation with the Iranians that was part of the Iran-contra scandal. Fuller reported directly to Gates.

Kerr, under Metzbaum's questioning, acknowledged yesterday that the Iran estimate and another on Mexico were flawed. They were not politicized, he said, "just poorly done. They were examples of what I thought was a bad process. . . . Now there were a hundred other estimates that I think were done rather well, but on those two and on some others, I had some problems."

On the Iran estimate, Kerr said, there was a conflict in Fuller's role as drafter and then, as NIO, the person who had to "sit at the head of the table and take the comments on his own draft," Kerr said.

"Unless you're a very big person, that's tough to do, and I don't think that's the way the process should work. And so I was complaining about that," Kerr said.

The question of whether Gates suppressed dissent on the Iran estimate surfaced last week when Gates told Sen. Bill Bradley (D-N.J.) that he had talked the top State Department intelligence officer in 1985, Morton Abramowitz, out of a dissenting footnote. Bradley also accused Gates of excluding from the process the "Soviet section of the CIA."

Gates responded: "The analysts weren't excluded from involvement in the estimate - they simply did not have their views accepted."

Gates has long criticized the slanting of intelligence, which he has said would violate the central tenet of the profession.

Gates has long criticized analysis as too cautious and had demanded a more rigorous and provocative approach from his analysts, which might have led to dissatisfaction.

One former analyst who is not a strong Gates defender said morale problems existed mainly for those who were not succeeding under Gates. "There were large numbers of people at relatively high levels," he said, "who were perfectly happy with the situation. They advanced rapidly and they felt appreciated and so on. That's always the problem talking about morale—somebody's excellent morale may be riding on the back of somebody's miserable morale."