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## 'I Have Believed ... in Public Service.'

*Following is the text of the letter Anthony Lake sent President Clinton yesterday asking the president to withdraw his nomination to be Director of Central Intelligence:*

I am writing to ask that you withdraw my nomination to be Director of Central Intelligence. I do so not because of concern that the nomination would be defeated if it ever came to a vote. In fact, there are sufficient votes for confirmation—in both the Select Committee and the Senate.

And not because of concern about further personal attacks. That gauntlet has been run. Every question has been answered.

I do so because I have regretfully concluded that it is the right thing to do.

While we have made great progress in the nomination process over the past month and during last week's hearings, I have learned over the weekend that the process is once again faced by endless delay. It is a political football in a game with constantly moving goal posts.

After more than three months, I have finally lost patience, and the endless delays are hurting the CIA and NSC staff in ways I can no longer tolerate.

I am told that the Chairman of the committee, having now reviewed the positive FBI materials underlying the report on my background investigation, may want other members of the committee to read them. I had doubts about the precedent we have already set in allowing him and the Vice Chairman such access. To bend principle further would even more discourage fu-

ture nominees to this or other senior positions from entering public service.

I am also told that his committee staff will again insist that NSC staff meet with the committee on terms that White House Counsel will find unacceptable, leading to a further stalemate on that issue as well.

In addition, the story today about the activities of Mr. Roger Tamraz is likely to lead to further delay as an investigation proceeds.

All of this means a nomination process that has no end in sight. We have been proceeding on the assumption that there would be a vote this week. It now seems certain the committee deliberations will extend past the recess until after Easter, and probably longer. In addition, even after the nomination receives a vote in committee, whenever that might be, there is no prospect for a near-term vote on the floor and every chance it will be extended as long as your political opponents can do so.

I have gone through the past three months and more with patience and, I hope, dignity. But I have lost the former and could lose the latter as this political circus continues indefinitely. As Senator Richard Lugar, perhaps the most respected member of the Senate, has said with regard to my nomination and its treatment, "The whole confirmation process has become more and more outrageous." It is nasty and brutish without being short.

If this were a game, I would persist until we won. My colleagues tell me to stay the course, lest I be perceived the loser or scared of a further fight. I'm not.

But this is not a game. And this process is not pri-

## *.. But Washington Has Gone Haywire'*

marily about me. It is about the future of the Central Intelligence Agency. The Agency, once again, is becoming politicized. The longer this goes on, the worse the damage. The controversy and its effects could linger on after my confirmation. The men and women of the CIA deserve better than this.

The process is also impugning, through a new form of guilt by association, the names of NSC staff members who have done nothing wrong. So long as my nomination is mired in partisan politics their reputations will be, as well. It is ironic that the staff, which in every case took the right positions in keeping national security decisions and domestic politics separate, as I had encouraged them to do, is now the staff beating the brunt of criticism because it didn't go beyond its own responsibilities to manage others' business as well. This is a staff that was doing its job properly. There was never any disguise of wrong-doing; they were consistently doing right in the advice they offered, while concentrating on the large daily agenda of important national security issues before us. I am very proud of our work on these issues and very proud of our staff members.

In unprecedented fashion the nomination is also politicizing the Senate committee.

And I have noticed that, in numerous ways, it is poisoning the attitude of members of the Agency towards the committee.

Most of all, the way this process has been conducted would make it difficult for me to work with the committee in the ways that a Director of Central Intelligence must do—and as I had hoped to do.

I am deeply grateful to you for your strong support, for your encouragement over these difficult months, and—most of all—for the opportunity to serve over the past four years. I am very proud of your foreign policy record and of whatever contributions I made to it.

I have greatly appreciated the support of Senators McCain, Lugar, Lieberman, Kerrey, Kerry, Kennedy and many others, like John Deutch. I have been moved by the principled position of a large number of Republicans like John McCain, Warren Rudman, Richard Lugar, Robert Gates and Peter King. And I am especially grateful to the volunteers from the NSC who have put so much into this, as well as officials of the CIA. I am sorry that their efforts were not better rewarded.

I have believed all my life in public service. I still do. But Washington has gone haywire.

I hope that, sooner rather than later, people of all political views beyond our city limits will demand that Washington give priority to policy over partisanship, to governing over "gotcha." It is time that senior officials have more time to concentrate on dealing with very real foreign challenges rather than with the domestic wounds that Washington is inflicting on itself.

This is a very difficult decision. I was excited about this new opportunity to serve. I had developed firm ideas on how to bring further reform to the Agency and had no doubt about my capacity to implement them. I was ready to devote four years to a tough new challenge. I truly regret that I will not have the opportunity to seize it.