



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 109th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 151

WASHINGTON, Thursday April 21, 2005

No. 49

Senate

Statement of Senator Dianne Feinstein

“Negroponte confirmation”

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, as a member of the Intelligence Committee, I wish to make a few comments both about Ambassador John Negroponte and also LTG Michael Hayden. He is soon to be General Hayden, I understand.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Will the Senator allow me to yield to her such time as she may desire?

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. I certainly will. I thank the Senator from West Virginia.

I know General Hayden will be a four-star general very shortly. I think that is very good news. So we will have the first Director and Principal Deputy Director of National Intelligence.

I believe these are both excellent nominees. They will provide strong new overall management and leadership to the intelligence community as it finally adapts to post-Cold War realities.

Ambassador Negroponte has served with distinction, both in Washington and around the

globe. He served as United States Ambassador to four nations and to the United Nations. As Deputy National Security Adviser, Ambassador Negroponte was intimately involved in the formation and use of intelligence. He is well suited to overseeing the collection of vital intelligence needed for the United States to protect itself. Ambassador Negroponte comes to this new position without strong ties or bias to any specific intelligence agency. That is an enormous strength, and I believe he will be an honest broker and manager for the community. He has pledged that he will be a neutral and apolitical provider of intelligence to Government policymakers.

Although General Hayden's nomination is not before us at this time, I wish to say I hold him in the highest regard. He is a skilled manager and an expert in the workings of our Nation's intelligence apparatus. General Hayden led a remarkable turnaround of an enormously complex and technical agency, the National Security Agency. He was first made Director of the NSA under President Clinton and has

had his tour extended three times by President Bush. That is a true testament to his leadership. He has proven his ability to establish a skilled and dedicated workforce. In short, General Hayden is a strong choice to be the day-to-day manager of the intelligence community.

Both men have the strength, the vision, and the determination that is necessary to be successful in their new positions.

As my colleagues know, I introduced legislation to create a DNI in the 107th Congress and again in the 108th Congress. So I was pleased to see that with the support of the 9/11 Commission and the chairs and ranking members of the Intelligence and Governmental Affairs Committees, this position was finally established.

As Director and Deputy Director of National Intelligence, these appointees face daunting challenges. The 15 intelligence agencies are a community in name only. The fiefdoms and turf battles -- the stovepipes -- between agencies may have lessened since

September 11, but they continue to hinder our intelligence operations.

Our technical means for collecting intelligence must be adapted to this new nonstate terrorist world and its challenges. The acquisition and development of new intelligence systems need better management.

The demands for better human intelligence are well documented by reports, including the Congressional Joint Inquiry, our Intelligence Committee's Iraq study, the 9/11 Commission, and the President's own WMD Commission. Each of these reports spells out, in stark terms, the organizational, the leadership, and the capability challenges that await Director Negroponte and General Hayden.

The U.S. intelligence estimates of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction were, as the WMD Commission stated, "dead wrong" before the war. There was a lack of solid intelligence, made worse by fundamental and inexcusable lapses in tradecraft and judgment. The systematic failings will take sustained leadership and vigorous oversight to correct.

Our intelligence capabilities in other crucial areas -- Iran and North Korea among them -- are still inadequate and unacceptable. As the war and postwar operations in Iraq show dramatically and tragically, we cannot govern effectively and

cannot make informed decisions without timely and accurate intelligence. We cannot afford to fail again. The stakes are very large, indeed.

Thankfully, the recent Commission and Senate reports have also made important recommendations. Both Ambassador Negroponte and General Hayden have expressed willingness to make important changes. They will take steps to integrate and bolster intelligence collection and to end "group think" and untested assumptions. They will use red teams and alternative analysis when intelligence conflicts. This was a substantial lacking that led to the wrong judgments made in the Iraq National Intelligence Estimate that so many of us relied upon to make our judgment on how to vote to authorize the President with use of force in Iraq.

The Director also has the authority to put in place a management team and implement changes, including new mission managers and new centers, to focus attention on the most pressing problems.

I believe strongly it is going to take a strong and authoritative Director of National Intelligence to put our intelligence community back on the right track. Equally important, it will take forthright and impeccably objective leaders to restore the credibility both to the American people and to the world that was destroyed by the assessments of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction.

The legislation that created the DNI last year, the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act, spells out the framework for a strong DNI, but it did not fill in the details. The authorities and responsibilities that should have been made clear in law, I believe, will have to be instead established in practice. I have discussed privately and through the confirmation hearing process with Ambassador Negroponte the need for him to assert authority by taking bold action to lead and manage the intelligence community, and I will support him in doing so.

I have confidence the new Director shares this vision and will take the necessary steps immediately after taking office. General Hayden, with his experience in fighting these battles as Director of NSA, will be a key adviser and ally in fulfilling this charge.

The men and women who work for the 15 intelligence agencies are skilled and dedicated, but they need innovative, new tools and ways of doing business to meet our future strategic intelligence needs. I am confident that Director Negroponte and Deputy Director Hayden will work to provide these needs.

I thank the President for forwarding such skilled, nonpartisan nominees, and I wholeheartedly support their confirmation.

I yield the floor.