

M. WILLS, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of January 7, 2009.

NOMINATION OF DENNIS C. BLAIR

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise today as chairman of the Select Committee on Intelligence to urge the Senate to confirm Admiral Dennis C. Blair to be the next Director of National Intelligence.

Admiral Blair is well known to many of us from his years of service as the Commander in Chief of the U.S. Pacific Command. He has served with distinction in the national security field all his adult life, entering the Naval Academy in 1964 and serving for 34 years.

During his naval career, Admiral Blair was involved in the intelligence field and in policymaking. He worked twice in the White House, first as a fellow and then on the National Security Council staff. He worked for 2 years at the CIA as the Associate Director for Military Support. And he was named to be the Director of the Joint Staff in 1996.

He has been a consumer and a manager of intelligence through his career, and he has a strong understanding of the importance of providing the President, the Congress, and other policymakers with accurate, actionable, and timely intelligence.

Admiral Blair will be the Nation's third Director of National Intelligence, a position that was left vacant by the resignation of ADM Mike McConnell earlier this week. It is critical that Admiral Blair be confirmed so that the intelligence community has the leadership it needs.

I hope that the Senate will confirm Admiral Blair on a strong bipartisan basis, sending the signal that we are united in our support for the nominee and in our interest in strong leadership of the intelligence community.

The position of the Director of National Intelligence was created so that there would be a single leader of the 16 intelligence agencies who could bring greater integration to the work of U.S. intelligence. The job of the Director is to break down the stovepipes and put intelligence agencies back on the right track when they go astray.

Progress has been made by the previous Directors, Ambassador Negroponte and Admiral McConnell, but they would agree much work is ahead. As Admiral Blair said to the committee, it will be his job as the DNI to see that "the whole of the national intelligence enterprise is always more than the sum of its parts."

Admiral Blair has pledged, however, to take forceful action when there are disagreements or when he believes an agency is not performing as it should.

He has a keen appreciation both for the many smart, dedicated and brave professionals in the intelligence community workforce and for the role of the DNI to give these professionals the right missions, and the right tools, to collect the intelligence we need and conduct professional and accurate analysis.

President-elect Obama announced his intention to nominate Admiral Blair on January 9, 2009, and then President Obama submitted the nomination to the Senate on his first afternoon in office. The Intelligence Committee carefully reviewed Admiral Blair's record and his views on the role of the Director of National Intelligence, the threats facing the United States, and the appropriate way for the intelligence community to handle its missions.

The committee held a public hearing with Admiral Blair on January 22, at which he was introduced and supported by our distinguished colleague and very first chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, Senator INOUE.

Before and after the hearing, Admiral Blair answered numerous questions for the record. His answers can be found on the committee's Web site, and I commend them to all Members and the public for a better understanding of his views about the important office to which he has been nominated, and the challenges he will face on behalf of the American people.

I have been especially pleased with the commitment of Admiral Blair to address the issue of congressional oversight. In our prehearing questions, we asked Admiral Blair about his views on keeping the intelligence committees fully and currently informed of intelligence activities.

We asked him to address in particular the failure to brief the entire membership of the intelligence committees on the CIA's interrogation, detention, and rendition program, and the NSA's electronic surveillance program. His direct answer recognized a fundamental truth: "These programs were less effective and did not have sufficient legal and constitutional foundations because the intelligence committees were prevented from carrying out their oversight responsibilities."

Admiral Blair has pledged that he will work closely with the committee and the Congress to build a relationship of trust and candor. He has said that the leadership of the intelligence community must earn the support and trust of the intelligence oversight committees if it is to earn the trust and support of the American people. I wholeheartedly agree.

I am confident that Admiral Blair will ensure that the membership of the select committee is given access to the information it needs to perform its oversight role, and U.S. intelligence programs will have a stronger foundation because of it.

He has also agreed to come before the committee on a monthly basis to have candid discussions with all members on the major issues he sees and the challenges he faces. These sessions are enormously important for the committee to truly understand the workings of the intelligence community and to carry out our oversight responsibilities.

In addition, Admiral Blair will have a pivotal role in the implementation of

the recent presidential Executive orders to close the detention center in Guantanamo and ensure there is a single standard for the humane and lawful treatment of detainees by U.S. military and intelligence services.

These executive orders represent an extraordinarily important turning point for our Nation. Admiral Blair has made strong statements to the committee that torture is not moral, legal, or effective, and that the U.S. Government must have a single clear standard for the treatment and interrogation of detainees. I am convinced he will help ensure we are once more true to our ideals and protecting our national security.

Having been an early advocate of the creation of the position, it is for me a distinct honor that my very first floor responsibility as the new chairman of the Intelligence Committee is to report this nomination.

I am pleased to relay to my colleagues that the Intelligence Committee met today, on January 28, and voted to report favorably the nomination of Admiral Blair to be the Director of National Intelligence.

The Senate has moved quickly to act on this recommendation. It is a testament to the importance of the position and the qualifications of the nominee. I thank the vice chairman for working with me to move the nomination quickly but with the due diligence appropriate for this position.

Admiral Blair has my strong support to lead the intelligence community and I look forward to working with him closely in the days to come.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I rise to congratulate Admiral Denny Blair on his unanimous confirmation as the Director of National Intelligence, one of the most important and demanding jobs in our government. This position requires a leader with tremendous management skills—someone capable of bringing the 16 disparate agencies of the intelligence community into a cohesive organization that provides timely, accurate intelligence to our government.

This intelligence is necessary to keep our Nation and our people safe, so Admiral Blair undertakes a sober, solemn responsibility today. He will take on this task at a time when we are fighting two wars as well as a global fight against terrorist networks, not to mention enormous long-term strategic challenges—including those that have arisen in recent months in the wake of the global financial and economic crisis.

These are perilous times, but I am confident he is up to the task. Admiral Blair brings a wealth of valuable experience to the job. As a senior military commander he was a high level consumer of intelligence and familiar with the systems used to collect and produce intelligence. He also knows the Central Intelligence Agency having spent time as the first Associate Director for Military Affairs.

Perhaps his greatest attribute, however, is his experience directing a large, sprawling organization, made up of disparate agencies and cultures, to achieve a common mission. That is what he accomplished successfully as the commander of all U.S. military forces in the Pacific, and that is exactly what his mission will be as the DNI.

I think this is a very promising time for our intelligence community and our national security, and Admiral Blair's confirmation is a big part of that. I want to underscore what he told us in his confirmation hearing—that we are entering a “new era in the relationship” between Congress and the executive branch on matters of intelligence.

Specifically, Admiral Blair said that he will place great importance on keeping Congress informed—not just formally notified, but fully informed—on intelligence activities. He said that he will work to ensure that classification is not used as a way to, in his words, “hide things” from Members of Congress who need to know about them.

He stated clearly and I quote, “We need to have processes which don't just check a block on telling somebody but actually get the information across to the right people.”

These are very important commitments, and they portend good things for our intelligence community and for our national security. I have had the opportunity to speak with Admiral in great depth over the past several months, and these discussions have given me confidence in his sincerity with these commitments.

And I expect that, likewise, he and the Obama administration have confidence that Congress will hold them to it. In fact this cooperation has already begun.

With this new era of cooperation in mind, I want to state for the record that we have an opportunity to make a sharp turn toward new intelligence policies that will bolster our counterterrorism efforts and strengthen our national security in general.

To be accurate and valuable, intelligence must be politically neutral information, not spin. And it must be collected with methods that enjoy bipartisan support as both legal and effective.

To ensure this, secret intelligence activities must be subject to rigorous congressional oversight. We are the only independent reviewers of secret intelligence activities, and we are the only outside check on activities that are not legal or not effective.

Oversight should not be adversarial—it is a necessary partnership between the executive branch and the Congress.

I have fought to remove politics from intelligence and to restore Congress's vital oversight role since I joined the committee in 2001, and I will keep fighting for it now.

I don't want to get into who is at fault for the cycle we were caught in over the past several years. Instead I

want to look ahead to what is possible now.

I think there is a real chance that in this new year, we can have a new start.

We can and should debate how we go about collecting and analyzing intelligence—for instance on interrogation policies—but we can do that without the stain of political considerations.

Between the executive and legislative branches, we can and should engage and debate these policies, but we can do that in partnership, with the knowledge that more information exchanges and deliberations give rise to better intelligence collection and analysis.

In short, we can recognize that we are all on the same team when it comes to finding out the sensitive information we need to protect this great Nation.

If we play on that same team, I know we can have accurate, reliable intelligence that is collected in a way that makes this country proud, and is analyzed without the taint of political influence.

I congratulate Admiral Denny Blair on his confirmation.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I wish to express my support for the nomination of ADM Dennis Blair to be the next Director of National Intelligence.

Over the past several weeks, Admiral Blair and I have spoken at length about the role of the DNI and the expectations that we in Congress will have of him.

First and foremost, we expect that the DNI will direct the intelligence community and not be a coordinator or consensus-seeker or govern by majority.

Second, the DNI must be a strong leader, standing on equal footing with the Secretary of Defense and other Cabinet officials.

Third, the DNI must assert appropriate authority over the CIA—it is the DNI, and the DNI alone, who should speak and act as the President's intelligence adviser.

I am pleased that Admiral Blair has pledged that he will come back to Congress to ask for any additional authorities if he determines that such authorities are needed to direct the intelligence community.

The intelligence community needs a strong leader right now. As we know, last week the President signed a number of Executive orders that not only will have a lasting impact on how we fight this war on terror but have created immediate and serious legal and practical problems in handling terrorist detainees.

Admiral Blair will play a key role in the implementation of these Executive orders.

I believe that the sooner he learns all the facts about the CIA's interrogation and detention program and the ramifications of closing Guantanamo Bay, the better he will be able to guide that process in a manner that will not jeopardize American lives.

Admiral Blair has had a long and distinguished career in Government service. He brings a lifetime of sound judgment and strong character to this difficult job.

I believe Admiral Blair is up to the task of leading the intelligence community and I would urge my colleagues to support his nomination.

#### NOMINATIONS DISCHARGED

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Foreign Relations Committee be discharged of PN65-15 and 65-9; the Budget and Homeland Security Committee be discharged of PN65-12; and the Banking Committee be discharged of PN64-15; and the Senate then proceed, en bloc, to the nominations; that the Senate then proceed to vote on confirmation of the nominations, en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nominations of James Steinberg to be Deputy Secretary of State; Jacob Lew to be Deputy Secretary of State, Management and Resources; Robert Nabors to be Deputy Director, OMB; and Christina Romer to be a member of the Council of Economic Advisors?

The nominations were confirmed.

Mr. TESTER. I move to reconsider and table; and I ask unanimous consent that no further motions be in order; that any statements relating to the nominations be printed in the RECORD; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's actions and the Senate then resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The nominations considered and confirmed are as follows:

#### DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Jacob J. Lew, of New York, to be Deputy Secretary of State for Management and Resources.

#### OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET

Robert L. Nabors II, of New Jersey, to be Deputy Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

#### COUNCIL OF ECONOMIC ADVISERS

Christina Duckworth Romer, of California, to be a Member of the Council of Economic Advisers.

#### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will return to legislative session.

#### PROVIDING FOR AN ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H. Con. Res. 26, the House adjournment resolution, which is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the concurrent resolution by title.