



**OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE
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WASHINGTON, D.C.
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**REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT,
DEPUTY SECRETARY OF STATE NOMINEE JOHN NEGROPONTE,
AND DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE NOMINEE
VICE ADMIRAL MIKE McCONNELL**

LOCATION: THE WHITE HOUSE - THE ROOSEVELT ROOM

January 5, 2007
9:45 A.M. EST

PRESIDENT BUSH: Mr. Vice President, thank you. Madam Secretary, thank you for joining us. Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the White House. I am pleased to announce that I intend to nominate Ambassador John Negroponte to be our next Deputy Secretary of State, and Vice Admiral Mike McConnell to be America's next Director of National Intelligence.

Under the leadership of Secretary Rice, the men and women of the State Department are working to expand freedom and defend America's interests around the world. The Deputy Secretary of State is a key role in shaping American foreign policy and in guiding our diplomats deployed around the globe. The Deputy Secretary also helps our nation's chief diplomat manage the State Department, and helps coordinate with other federal agencies so that America speaks to the world with one voice.

I have asked John Negroponte to serve in this vital position at this crucial moment. John Negroponte knows the State Department well. After all, he started there in 1960 as a Foreign Service Officer in the administration of President Eisenhower. In the four-and-a-half decades since, he has served our nation in eight Foreign Service posts, spanning three continents. He served as Deputy National Security Advisor to President Reagan. He represented America at the United Nations. He served as our first ambassador to a free Iraq. And for nearly two years, John has done a superb job as America's first Director of National Intelligence.

John Negroponte's broad experience, sound judgment and expertise on Iraq and in the war on terror make him a superb choice as Deputy Secretary of State, and I look forward to working with him in this new post.

Ambassador Negroponte leaves big shoes to fill as the Director of National Intelligence. The DNI has become a core part of our national security team. The DNI determines the national intelligence budget, oversees the collection and analysis of intelligence information, ensures that intelligence agencies share information with each other, and creates common standards for intelligence community personnel. The vigilance of the DNI helps keep the American people safe from harm.

Admiral Mike McConnell has the experience, the intellect, and the character to succeed in this position. He served as Director of the National Security Agency during the 1990s. He was the intelligence officer for the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff during the liberation of Kuwait in Operation Desert Storm. Admiral McConnell has decades of experience, ensuring that our military forces had the intelligence they need to fight and win wars.

He's worked with the Congress and with the White House to strengthen our defenses against threats to our information systems. He has earned our nation's highest award for service in the intelligence community. As DNI, Mike will report directly to me, and I am confident he will give me the best information and analysis that America's intelligence community can provide.

I thank John and Mike for taking on these new challenges. I appreciate their service to our country. Each of them will do good work in their new positions. And it is vital they take up their new responsibilities promptly. I'm confident the United States Senate will also see the value of these two serving in crucial positions. And I would hope that they would be confirmed as quickly as possible.

Congratulations to you both. Thank you very much.

AMBASSADOR NEGROPONTE: Thank you very much, Mr. President, Mr. Vice President, Secretary Rice, Admiral McConnell. It's been a great honor, Mr. President, to serve as your first Director of National Intelligence. I will always be grateful to you for having given me the opportunity to help achieve the goals that you and the Congress set for intelligence reform.

During the past 20 months, I believe that our intelligence community has embraced the challenge of functioning as a single unified enterprise, and reaffirmed the fact that it is the best intelligence community in the world, second to none. That's to the credit of the hundreds -- the thousands of intelligence professionals who serve this nation around the globe, many in harm's way. They and their families make great sacrifices to keep America safe. It has been a privilege to lead them, and it is because of them that I leave the post of the Director of National Intelligence with regret.

But I am heartened to know that the intelligence community now will be led by Admiral Mike McConnell, a man whose exceptional accomplishments as an intelligence professional will ensure wise stewardship and success as the Director of National Intelligence. Admiral McConnell will continue to drive forward the reforms we have initiated, fully integrating the domestic, foreign and military dimensions of our national intelligence enterprise.

Now for someone who started his career as a junior foreign service officer in October of 1960, the position, Mr. President, to which you are now nominating me is a -- an opportunity of a lifetime. If confirmed by the Senate as Deputy Secretary of State, I look forward to supporting Secretary Rice in carrying out your foreign policy goals. I particularly welcome the opportunity to help her provide leadership to the thousands of Americans and foreign nationals who work in the Department of State here in the United States, and in the more than 270 embassies, consulates, and diplomatic missions the Department maintains overseas.

Whether in Baghdad, Kabul, Kosovo, or elsewhere, these dedicated professionals are on the front line of advancing America's commitment to freedom. It will be a great privilege for me to come home to the Department where I began my career and rejoin a community of colleagues whose work is so important and of whom the nation is so justly proud.

Thank you very much.

PRESIDENT BUSH: Good job. Thank you. Michael.

VICE ADMIRAL McCONNELL: Mr. President, Mr. Vice President, Secretary Rice, Ambassador. Thank you very much, sir, for your kind remarks and your vote of confidence in asking me to become your second Director of National Intelligence. If confirmed by the Senate, I look forward to serving you, Mr. President, the nation's senior leadership and all the great men and women of our national security and homeland security communities.

I understand these people rely on timely and useful intelligence every day. After spending most of my adult life in the intelligence community, focused on getting the right information to the right decision-maker in the right time and format, I'm excited about returning.

Fortunately, my work over the past 10 years after leaving government has allowed me to stay focused on the national security and intelligence communities as a strategist and as a consultant. Therefore, in many respects, I never left. I have followed the issues and the initiatives, and I hope to be quickly and directly relevant to build on the many accomplishments of Ambassador Negroponte and his team.

Unlike just a decade ago, the threats of today and the future are moving at increasing speeds and across organizational and geographic boundaries. This will require increased coordinated responsiveness by our community of intelligence professionals. I plan to continue the strong emphasis on integration of the community to better serve all of our customers. That will mean better sharing of information, increased focus on customer needs and service, improved security processes, and deeper penetration of our targets to provide the needed information for tactical, operational and strategic decision-making.

Public service has always been my passion. I look forward to serving this great nation as we continue to fight on the global war on terrorism and to face the many new challenges of the new century.

I want to thank my wife, Terry, and my wonderful family and our grandchildren for their support as I take on these new challenges.

Thank you again, Mr. President. All the best, Mr. Ambassador, for your new leadership role at the Department of State.

PRESIDENT BUSH: Thank you all.