

Remarks at a Swearing-In Ceremony for John D. Negroponte as Director of National Intelligence and Michael V. Hayden as Deputy Director of National Intelligence

May 18, 2005

Good afternoon. Thank you for being here. I am honored and pleased to congratulate John Negroponte on becoming America's first Director of National Intelligence. I also congratulate General Mike Hayden on becoming on our Nation's first principal Deputy Director of National Intelligence.

I want to thank Secretary of State Condi Rice and Secretary of Defense Don Rumsfeld for joining us today. I appreciate Porter Goss, head of the Central Intelligence Agency, for joining us, Robert Mueller, Director of the FBI.

I appreciate Senator Ted Stevens, Senate President pro tem, joining us today, along with Senator Jay Rockefeller. Thank you both for being here. I want to thank Congressman Peter Hoekstra, chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, along with Congresswoman Jane Harman, ranking member. Thank you both for coming.

I appreciate Chuck Robb, Co-Chairman of the WMD Commission, for joining us today. I want to thank members of the intelligence community who have joined us. I thank the rest of you for coming too. [*Laughter*]

Ambassador Negroponte's position is one of the newest in the Government and one of the most demanding. Our Nation is at war, and John is making sure that those whose duty it is to defend America have the information we need to make the right decisions. He's ensuring that our intelligence agencies work as a single, unified enterprise. And he's serving as my principal intelligence adviser. These are vital and urgent responsibilities, and John has what it takes to fulfill them all.

In his distinguished career, John has represented America in eight nations on three continents. He's served every President since Dwight Eisenhower. Over the past 4 years, I've come to know John's wisdom, intellect, and integrity. I've relied on his candid judgment to help solve complicated problems. I have witnessed his unique ability to bring

people together, most recently in his historic achievements as Ambassador to a free Iraq. I'm grateful to John for answering his Nation's call. I thank his family for joining us today.

John is fortunate to count on an experienced and capable deputy in General Mike Hayden. General Hayden understands the intelligence community from the ground up. He has a long record of wise and effective reform. Mike also has a clear understanding of our enemies in the war on terror. He'll be a superb deputy to Ambassador Negroponte. I thank Mike for his willingness to serve, and I'm glad to see his family as well.

As John Negroponte and Mike Hayden carry out their new duties, they're relying on the thousands of dedicated professionals working in our intelligence community. These men and women serve America with a wide variety of talents and expertise. They all report to work everyday with the same goal, to protect our fellow citizens from harm. Intelligence officers work in secret and often at great risk to their lives. Their vigilance and bravery are vital to America's security. And on behalf of all Americans, I thank them and their families for their service in the cause of freedom.

As Director of National Intelligence, John is taking action to help all who serve in the intelligence community to do their jobs more effectively. He has assembled a strong leadership team that reflects a wide range of skills and intelligence experience. He's visited a number of intelligence agencies. He's listened to experts in a variety of fields, and he's made reforms in the daily intelligence briefing. John recognizes and values the contributions of all who collect and analyze intelligence. He will ensure that they have access to the tools and information their missions demand.

In the days ahead, Ambassador Negroponte and General Hayden will continue the structural reforms of our intelligence community that began after September the 11th, 2001. We've now implemented the vast majority of the 9/11 Commission's recommendations through Executive orders and the intelligence reform bill I signed last December.

My administration is also reviewing all the recommendations made by the Silberman-Robb Commission on weapons of mass destruction. We have already begun to implement a number of their recommendations. We will continue to evaluate and act on the Commission's useful blueprint to improve the quality and quantity of intelligence we collect and to be able to analyze that information more thoroughly.

John Negroponte will also ensure the sharing of information among agencies and establish common standards for the intelligence community's personnel. I have confidence in John Negroponte and Mike Hayden to carry out these vital missions. Well-integrated, effective intelligence efforts are America's first line of defense against the threats of the 21st century.

I thank the Congress for creating the Director of National Intelligence position and for swiftly confirming two talented, dedicated Americans to lead our intelligence community. I look forward to working with this team to improve our intelligence capabilities and to use those capabilities to win the war on terror.

Congratulations to both men. May God bless you and your families, and may God continue to bless our country.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:18 p.m. in the Courtyard at the New Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to the Commission on the Intelligence Capabilities of the United States Regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction (Silberman-Robb Commission); and the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (9/11 Commission). The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Director Negroponte.

Remarks at the International Republican Institute Dinner May 18, 2005

Thank you all. Thank you. Thanks. Please be seated. Thank you for the warm welcome. I thank John for that introduction. John McCain is a man of honor and integrity and personal courage. He's an outstanding chairman for the International Republican Institute. He campaigned with me, for which I

was grateful, and one time he said, "Do you believe in free speech?" I said, "I do." He said, "Why don't you get over to the IRI and give one, then?" [*Laughter*]

It was an honor to meet your mother, John—Roberta. There she is. Mrs. McCain, it's good to see you. If you're anything like my mother, I'm sure you're telling John what to do. [*Laughter*] If he's anything like me, he's listening to you about half the time. [*Laughter*] But thank you very much, John.

I appreciate your president, Lorne Craner. He did a fantastic job in our administration as Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy and Human Rights and Labor, and he continues to do good work.

I regret Laura is not with us tonight. You probably think she's working on some of her one-liners. [*Laughter*] She's actually packing her bags because she's off for Jordan and Israel and Egypt to continue to deliver the freedom message, and I can't think of a better messenger.

I want to thank Peter Madigan and John Thain. I want to thank the Members of the Congress who are here tonight. I particularly want to say hello and thanks to my close friend Ambassador Jerry Bremer for his fantastic work in Iraq. Thank you, Jerry, for your good job.

I'm pleased to know that Paul Wolfowitz is with us tonight, President-elect of the World Bank. I'm going to miss him as a part of my administration. But I want to tell you something: The world will be better off with Paul Wolfowitz as the head of the World Bank.

I want to thank the members of the diplomatic corps.

And I want to thank you for this fine award. I understand a little later on you're going to give an award to a true champion of freedom, and that is Pope John Paul II. Everywhere he went, Pope John Paul preached the call of freedom is for every member of the human family, because the Author of Life wrote it into our common human nature. And in the end, even the Berlin Wall could not withstand the force of this humble Polish priest who became the Bishop of Rome and a true hero for the ages. Thank you for honoring this good man.