Nomination of Robert Gates as U.S. Secretary of Defense / Gates was a good choice

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Position: Gates was a good choice

This position addresses the topic Nomination of Robert Gates as U.S. Secretary of Defense.

For this position

"Gates embodies the group's effort to find a bipartisan policy for Iraq. In that sense, he will go to the Pentagon with an invisible mission statement that can be summed up in two words: "exit strategy." He won't want to leave Iraq quickly or dangerously, but unlike Rumsfeld, he won't fight the problem."

From The Defense Secretary We Had, by David Ignatius (The Washington Post, November 9, 2006) (view)

"In hiring Robert Gates to replace Rumsfeld, Bush is turning back to his dad's team, which means the pragmatists are coming to the rescue. Hopefully, they're coming to rescue not only Bush's legacy, but also our efforts to defeat Islamic fundamentalists."

From Full speed sideways, by Michael Goodwin (New York Daily News, November 9, 2006) (view)

"Gates is more the get-along scholar—professional, fastidious, and nonpartisan. If George W. Bush was looking for an utterly uncontroversial figure to calm nerves, settle bureaucratic hostilities, and re-establish credibility on Capitol Hill, he could have found no one more suitable than Robert Gates."

From The Analyst Cometh, by Fred Kaplan (Slate, November 8, 2006) (view)

"Anyone who thinks Mr. Gates lacks grit or an independent mind is mistaken. He was clear-headed on the Soviets and will be clear-headed on the Islamofascists."

From From Rummy to Gates, by Emmett Tyrrell (The Washington Times, November 17, 2006) (view)

"Mr. Gates is an experienced Washington hand with the right temperament to change the administration’s thinking about our mission in Iraq and to make much-needed long-term changes in how we defend our nation."

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"Bob Gates is a dedicated public servant whom the Bush administration is entrusting much of its legacy. His decades of experience in intelligence and national security, his fairness and meticulousness, his skillfulness as a manager of large bureaucracies and his bipartisan appeal are valuable attributes a successor needs to move forward effectively."


"We may be seeking a "way out," but if the Iraq Survey Group proposes a solution with the merest whiff of selling out Iraq's popularly elected Shiites, expect crudely realistic leaders in Russia, China, Nigeria, Venezuela, Bolivia, Pakistan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and elsewhere to conclude they too can downgrade, or obliterate, their own U.S.-oriented democratic groups."


"Mr. Gates is a capable public servant with broad security experience. But much of that experience is with the CIA, which has misjudged the nature of the enemy throughout this conflict. Mr. Gates is also on the Baker-Hamilton study group that Congress established to examine policy options for Iraq, and we hope his nomination doesn't mean Mr. Bush has already signed onto its soon-to-be-released recommendations."

From Like Father, Like Son?, by Daniel Henninger (The Wall Street Journal, November 10, 2006) (view)

"Will Gates clean out Rumsfeld's civilian officials at the Pentagon? If so, where will the new officials come from? What will Gates do to mend the broken fences between the secretary's office and the angry uniformed officers? What will Gates do to restore relations between the Pentagon and Capitol Hill? The biggest question remains what he will do about Iraq, and probing his views promises a potentially stormy fight over Senate confirmation."


"The real untold story is just how wrong the American hard-liners, such as Gates, got the Soviet Union. Although they were the last to recognize that Mikhail S. Gorbachev was indeed reforming the USSR, they were the first to state that Gorbachev would be ousted and replaced by neo-Stalinists, as had been done to Nikita Khrushchev."

From Gates lacks defense experience, views on Iraq unknown, by Robert Novak (Chicago Sun-Times, November 9, 2006) (view)

Against this position

Mixed on this position

From Has Gates learned his lesson?, by Jennifer Glaudemans (Los Angeles Times, November
"Particularly worrisome is his alleged pattern of misjudging the capabilities of enemy states — the former Soviet Union and Iran — in precisely the ways that his political masters were bound to find most pleasing. But the point of these hearings is not to rehash Gates' past. It is to establish what he has learned from his mistakes and how he intends to prevent the Pentagon from repeating them."

From Confirm intelligence, by Los Angeles Times editorial board (Los Angeles Times, December 5, 2006) (view)