

Baker Aide Nominated as Ambassador to Germany

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By John M. Goshko
 Washington Post Staff Writer

Robert M. Kimmitt, a key member of Secretary of State James A. Baker III's inner circle at the State Department, was nominated by President Bush yesterday to be U.S. ambassador to Germany.

Kimmitt, 43, who has been undersecretary of state for political affairs since 1989, would succeed Vernon A. Walters, a retired Army lieutenant general, has announced his intention to end a long public service career that has involved a variety of military, intelligence and diplomatic posts.

The nomination of Kimmitt to be the chief U.S. representative in Eu-

rope's most economically powerful nation comes at a time when Germany is in the throes of major internal upheaval. It is struggling to complete reunion with the former communist East Germany following 45 years of postwar division.

Kimmitt, a West Point graduate who earned several decorations in Vietnam and then became a lawyer, has been closely associated with Baker for more than a decade. When Baker became secretary in 1989, Kimmitt was one of three aides who accompanied him to State and who since have been his principal operatives and braintrust. The others are Robert B. Zoellick, the departmental counselor, and Dennis B. Ross, chief of the policy planning staff.

As undersecretary, Kimmitt has been the third-highest ranking official at State, occupying a post that traditionally has been responsible for managing the department's day-to-day operations. Under Baker, some of those functions were assumed by Deputy Secretary Lawrence S. Eagleburger, allowing Kimmitt to concentrate on a more limited portfolio of issues assigned especially high priority by Baker.

He was involved deeply, for instance, in mapping U.S. strategy for combating Iraq in the Persian Gulf War. Earlier, he was in charge of U.S. efforts to resolve the civil war in Afghanistan. He recently visited Beijing to prod China to improve its human rights record and halt arms

sales to the Middle East, and he is at the forefront of U.S. efforts to avert a breakup of Yugoslavia.

His work in foreign policy began under former President Jimmy Carter in 1978 when, while still in the Army, he was assigned to the National Security Council staff. He left the military in 1982.

His association with Baker began when the 1980 election of Ronald Reagan as president brought Baker to the White House as chief of staff. In 1985, when Baker became treasury secretary, Kimmitt went with him as the Treasury Department's general counsel. After two years, he left for a brief stint in private law practice, but returned to government when Baker became secretary of state.

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