

PERSONALITY SPOTLIGHT; ROBERT GATES: ACTING CIA CHIEF
WASHINGTON

CIA Deputy Director Robert Gates, nominated to replace William Casey as the nation's No. 1 spy, assumed overall direction of all U.S. intelligence agencies when Casey was operated on Dec. 18, 1986, for a cancerous brain tumor that eventually forced his retirement.

Once his nomination by President Reagan is approved by the Senate, Gates, 43, is expected to succeed Casey in the twin role as CIA director and director of central intelligence.

The latter embraces overall responsibility for the Central Intelligence Agency, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the National Security Agency, the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence, various intelligence branches of the armed services and certain sections of the FBI and other government agencies.

Gates has testified before Congress on the Iran arms-Contra aid scandal and is certain to be called again to tell what the CIA knew about the arms sales and diversion of funds to the Contras that are fighting the Sandinista government of Nicaragua.

Casey had been scheduled to testify on Capitol Hill for a third time when he suffered two seizures and was admitted to the hospital, passing the day-to-day operations of the spy agency to Gates.

Secretary of State George Shultz called Gates "a worthy successor" and a "genuine professional with deep knowledge of all aspects of the intelligence community."

Sen. David Boren, D-Okla., chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, said in a statement he has had a good working relationship with Gates and hoped to continue it.

"Mr. Gates and I have discussed our common goal of making sure that the Intelligence Committee and the agency will be able to share information and ideas on a completely candid basis.

Gates is a native of Kansas who joined the CIA in 1966, specializing in Soviet affairs. He was appointed Casey's principal deputy in April 1986.

In 1974, he was assigned to the National Security Council staff and served there nearly six years during the Nixon, Ford and Carter administrations. He returned to the CIA in January 1980.

Gates received his bachelor's degree from the College of William and Mary in 1965 and a master's degree in history at Indiana University in 1966. He earned a doctorate in Russian and Soviet history from Georgetown University in 1974.