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Odom, Jones top list for CIA deputy

By Bill Gertz
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Officials have assembled a short list of candidates to replace Robert Gates as deputy CIA director, but so far they are unable to agree on a choice, according to Reagan administration sources.

Mr. Gates, the president's choice for intelligence chief, became acting CIA director when William J. Casey resigned after being stricken with cancer in December.

Mr. Gates was inundated with questions about the Iran-Contra affair during two days of confirmation hearings before the Senate Intelligence Committee last week.

Senate Majority Leader Robert Byrd said Mr. Gates did not appear to be in any immediate trouble in the Senate. But he said a vote could be delayed as long as a month because of congressional probes into the scandal.

"It's unfortunate that the administration did not nominate someone who was removed from all possible taint," Mr. Byrd told the Los Angeles Times over the weekend.

White House officials have said President Reagan does not plan to nominate a No. 2 man until after a new CIA chief is in place.

But the White House has put together a "short list" of senior military officials. The list has triggered a political debate inside the administration over who should assume the

important post, according to administration sources who asked not to be identified.

The most controversial candidate on the list is Vice Adm. Donald S. Jones, until recently a former military assistant to Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger.

Adm. Jones, currently on leave while awaiting retirement, served as a military assistant to Frank Carlucci, now the White House national security adviser, in 1981 and 1982 when Mr. Carlucci was deputy defense secretary.

Mr. Carlucci recently angered some intelligence officials by replacing NSC Intelligence Director Kenneth de Graffenreid with Barry Kelly, a former CIA official who rose to prominence under the Carter administration CIA director, Adm. Stansfield Turner.

According to several administration sources, Adm. Jones is a leading candidate for the deputy CIA post, despite Mr. Gates' preference for Lt. Gen. William Odom, the National Security Agency director.

One senior administration intelligence official said Adm. Jones was nominated to be NSA director early in the administration, but his name was vetoed by Mr. Casey.

According to the official, Mr. Casey blocked Adm. Jones for the NSA post because of his ties to Adm. Bobby Ray Inman, who resigned as deputy CIA director in 1982 after clashing with White House national

security officials over a series of proposed anti-spy programs.

Mr. Casey "didn't want an Inman protege at NSA," the official said.

"What you've got is Carlucci putting his agents of influence in place at the CIA," said the official.

The official said the deputy CIA director's post has increased in importance in recent years because of the huge growth in the U.S. intelligence community.

Directing U.S. intelligence "is really a two-man job — running the community and running the CIA," the official said.

Another intelligence source close to the CIA said the general reaction among some senior intelligence officials to Adm. Jones is: "Oh no, not another admiral."

The source said Adm. Jones represents a faction of the U.S. intelligence community, led by such former intelligence officials as Adm. Turner and Adm. Inman, that is "contemptuous of conservatives."

Privately, Mr. Gates recently told a Republican senator that he would like his deputy to come from the military and said Gen. Odom was his choice.

Gen. Odom, a Soviet affairs specialist, as is Mr. Gates, has the backing of administration officials who support the activist foreign policy of covert support for anti-communist resistance movements.

In a recent interview, Gen. Odom described U.S. support for the Afghan guerrilla movement as a critically important strategic competition with the Soviet Union that could eventually lead to the dissolution of the Soviet empire.

An Afghan guerrilla victory there, "would mark a dramatic shift in the correlation of forces in favor of liberal democracy," he said.