

Chairman Larry E. Craig

STATEMENT OF SENATOR LARRY E. CRAIG

At the hearing to consider the nominations of

Thomas E. Harvey and Patrick W. Dunne

Good morning ladies and gentlemen. The Committee on Veterans' Affairs convenes this morning to consider two nominations for important positions in the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Thomas Harvey has been nominated by President Bush to serve as Assistant Secretary for Congressional and Legislative Affairs. And Retired Admiral Patrick Dunne has been nominated by the President to serve as Assistant Secretary for Policy and Planning. Both of these gentlemen come before the Committee with vast experience in government and strong leadership credentials.

Mr. Harvey has spent nearly four decades serving his country in various areas of the government as well as performing equally valuable work in the private sector. He served his nation honorably in the United States Army -- spending almost three years in Vietnam with the 173rd Airborne Brigade. He earned a Silver Star, a Bronze Star with Oak Leaf Cluster, and was awarded the Purple Heart for injuries sustained during enemy combat.

Mr. Harvey may look very familiar to a few of you on this Committee. That's because some of his leadership skills were acquired right here in this room where he served two separate stints as the Committee's Staff Director and Chief Counsel under Chairman Alan Simpson, the former Senator from Wyoming. One of our colleagues, Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison of Texas is here today to introduce Tom so I will leave any additional comments on the rest of his impressive bio to her introduction.

Tom is also joined today by some of his family. However, I won't steal his thunder either by introducing them. Instead, I will give him the honor of introducing his family to us after opening comments.

Also before us today is Retired Rear Admiral Patrick Dunne, who comes to the Committee nominated to serve as Assistant Secretary for Policy and Planning. As many of you know, that office has been the focal point of much of the discussion surrounding the theft of a lap top computer and hard drive from a VA employee's home. The office Admiral Dunne has been chosen to lead has been vacant for nearly three years. I think this man is the right person to put it back together and lead it from the cloud it is under right now.

Admiral Dunne -- up to this point -- has spent most of his adult life serving to advance the cause of freedom in the United States Navy. He is a 1972 graduate of the Naval Academy in

Annapolis and he received his Master's Degree in Mathematics from the Navy's Post-graduate School in Monterey, California.

I think it goes without saying that a man who rises to rank of Rear Admiral in the U.S. Navy has clearly demonstrated his leadership skills time and again. The Admiral's list of assignments and duties over a 30 plus year career in the Navy is long and distinguished. But, I want to point out just one.

I am so pleased that the Admiral was able to spend about six months of quality time during the winter of 1973-74 in Idaho Falls, Idaho. Many of you may not know this, but the Idaho Falls area is home to one of the nation's pre-eminent nuclear facilities, the Idaho National Laboratory. And the Admiral spent time there at the Nuclear Propulsion Training Unit. If I had to guess, I would say that memories of his winter in Idaho Falls served as the impetus for ensuring that his last assignment was in Monterey, California. I will put the beauty of Idaho up against any place on the planet, including Monterey. But, I'll concede that the weather in Monterey is probably more pleasant.

Admiral Dunne is also joined by some of his family and I will give him the same opportunity to introduce all of them to the Committee.

First, however, I will ask both of you to stand up, raise your right hand and be sworn in as is customary for all nomination hearings.

####