



THE WHITE HOUSE
PRESIDENT
GEORGE W. BUSH


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President Bush Nominates Admiral Michael Mullen and General James Cartwright to Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

Roosevelt Room

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8:47 A.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning. Thank you all for coming. Mr. Secretary, thank you for joining us. I am sending to the United States Senate my nomination of Admiral Mike Mullen to be America's next Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. And I'm sending my nomination of General James Cartwright to be the next Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Mike Mullen and "Hoss" Cartwright are experienced military officers. They're highly qualified for these important positions. I thank them for agreeing to serve their country in these new capacities. We welcome Mike's wife, Deborah, and sons John and Michael. Thank you all for coming. Thanks for wearing the uniform. "Hoss's" wife got stuck on an airplane. (Laughter.) I'm sure she's going to forgive him, and hopefully forgive me. I thank you all for being here and joining on this -- joining these good men on this exciting day for them.



America is at war, and we're at war with brutal enemies who have attacked our nation and who would pursue nuclear weapons; who would use their control over oil as economic blackmail, and who intend to launch new attacks on our country. In such times, one of the most important decisions a President makes is the appointment of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The Chairman is our nation's highest-ranking military officer. He is the principal military advisor to the President, to the Secretary of Defense, the National Security Council, and the Homeland Security Council. He is responsible for ensuring that our military forces are ready to meet any challenge.

Admiral Mike Mullen is uniquely qualified to take on these important responsibilities. Mike has had an illustrious military career, spanning nearly four decades. He graduated from the United States Naval Academy in 1968. He earned an advanced degree from the Naval Postgraduate School. He has commanded three ships, a cruiser-destroyer group, and an aircraft carrier battle group. He served as commander of NATO's Joint Forces Command in Naples, Italy, with responsibility for Alliance missions

in the Balkans, Iraq, and Mediterranean. He served as Commander of U.S. Naval Forces Europe.

At the Pentagon, he has served as the Navy's Director of Surface Warfare; Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Resources, Requirements, and Assessments; Vice Chief of Naval Operations; and Chief of Naval Operations. Mike is a man of experience, of vision, and high integrity. He is the right man to lead America's Armed Forces, and, Mike, I thank you for agreeing to take on this important assignment.

I'm also nominating an outstanding military officer to serve as Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General "Hoss" Cartwright. He's a graduate of the University of Iowa, he earned an advanced degree from the Naval War College. He completed a fellowship at MIT. He's a Marine aviator who has commanded deployed Marines at all levels. He has broad experience on the joint staff, having served twice in the Directorate of Force Structure, Resources, and Assessment.

And since 2004, he's served as head of the U.S. Strategic Command. In that position, "Hoss" has been in charge of America's nuclear arsenal, missile defenses, space operations, information operations, global command and control, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance, and our nation's efforts to combat weapons of mass destruction. These are vital responsibilities and "Hoss" has met them with honor, skill and integrity. He has earned my trust and my confidence. He's going to make an outstanding Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs.

Upon confirmation by the Senate, Mike Mullen and "Hoss" Cartwright will succeed two of America's finest military officers -- General Pete Pace and Admiral Ed Giambastiani. Pete Pace has been at my side most of my presidency, serving first as my Vice Chairman -- as the Vice Chairman, and then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. We've been through a lot together. Pete was with me after the attacks of September the 11th. He played a key role in planning America's response to that brutal assault on the American homeland.

With the help of his leadership, our men and women in uniform brought down brutal dictatorships in Afghanistan and Iraq. They liberated 50 million people from unspeakable oppression. He's helped lead our military through unprecedented campaigns. And as he has done so, Pete never took his eye off the horizon and the threats that still lie ahead. He played a critical role in transforming our military for challenges of a new century. He made sure that future benefits -- future generations will benefit from the reforms that he has set in motion.

Pete made history as the first Marine to serve as Vice Chairman and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. I'm going to remember him simply as one of the best military officers and finest men I've been privileged to know. I'm grateful for his friendship, his sense of humor and his character. I also thank him for the life of service and I thank his wife, Lynne, and his children, as well.

I'm also grateful to Admiral Ed Giambastiani. I just call him Admiral "G." I appreciated his outstanding leadership as Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. He's an officer of character and vision, and I appreciate his insights and his strong military advice.

Prior to his service as Vice Chairman, Admiral "G" helped lead the transformation of our military as

Commander of the U.S. Joint Forces Command. He helped strengthen the NATO alliance as the first Supreme Allied Commander, Transformation. Ed has given 37 years of dedicated service to our country. His work will affect the security of our nation for decades to come. I thank him for his devotion to duty, I thank his wife, Cindy, and their children, as well.

Pete Pace and Ed Giambastiani are hard acts to follow. I can think of none more qualified to follow them than the men whose nominations I am sending to the United States Senate today. I call on the Senate to quickly confirm Mike Mullen and "Hoss" Cartwright. I thank these fine officers and their families for continuing to serve our country.

Thank you all for coming.

ADMIRAL MULLEN: Thank you, Mr. President. I appreciate those kind words and confidence that you and Secretary Gates have expressed in me. Thank you also for allowing my wife, Deborah, and my sons, Jack and Michael, to be with us today. I think we all know that very little can be achieved in life without the love, support and sacrifice of one's family, and I'm certainly no exception.

I'm honored to be nominated to serve as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff at this critical time in our history, and I welcome the opportunity to work with the Senate for confirmation. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with you, sir, Secretary Gates, the Congress, and our outstanding military leaders, including, of course, my fellow nominee, General "Hoss" Cartwright, as we wrestle with the diverse security challenges that lie before us.

Clearly, we remain a nation at war against formidable enemies. The way forward in Iraq and Afghanistan, the path we take now and in the future will shape the character of the longer, larger struggle against terror. It cannot be a military path alone, that much is clear. We must continue to focus on the broad range of America's defense and security commitments around the world, and on the many instruments of national power needed to safeguard those commitments.

We must remain faithful -- excuse me, we must remain mindful that we live in a world made smaller by the speed of change, more dangerous by the actions of extremists and tyrants, and, yet, more hopeful, more promising, by the power of partnerships, cooperation and trust.

The men and women of America's Armed Forces understand these complex challenges, Mr. President, and as you know, are finding new ways to overcome them each and every day. Our soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines, Coast Guardsmen and their families are the most dedicated, talented and courageous people with whom I have ever been privileged to serve. Representing them, serving them, in turn, as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, would be my great honor.

Thank you.

GENERAL CARTWRIGHT: Thank you, Mr. President, and Mr. Secretary. I'm both humbled and honored to move forward and fill this role as the Vice Chair -- Vice Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Family is important to me, also. And I have a son and a daughter that are currently deployed overseas in separate assignments, and I have a daughter that's here -- my oldest daughter -- in the local area, with her husband. But at the center of that is the greatest invention in the world, which is a grandson that's about three years old and it is my duty to spoil. (Laughter.) So I do have one other allegiance here, sir -- (laughter) -- and I have a wife that's sitting in Omaha with an airplane that's broken. (Laughter.)

If confirmed, I will focus all of my effort on the whole of government's efforts to prevail in this global war on terrorism, and to support our people in all of their phases of service; and also to try to move forward and look to the future for the capabilities that we're going to need to prevail as we move into the future as a nation.

Again, thank you, Mr. President, and thank you, Mr. Secretary.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you all. Thanks.

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