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Former U.S. Secretary of State Lawrence S. Eagleburger has replaced former CIA Director Robert M. Gates as a member of the Iraq Study Group, study group co-chairmen James A. Baker, III and Lee H. Hamilton said Friday.

Gates resigned in a conversation with Baker, explaining that he felt he could no longer serve on the Iraq Study Group after President George W. Bush announced his nomination Wednesday as the Secretary of Defense. Both Baker and Hamilton praised Gates' efforts on the Iraq Study Group, saying he had made significant contributions during his eight months as a member.

The Iraq Study Group is being coordinated by the United States Institute of Peace, with the support of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, the Center for the Study of the Presidency, and the James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy at Rice University.

"We owe Bob our thanks for his hard work on the Iraq Study Group and wish him well in his new position, for which he is well qualified," Baker and Hamilton said. "We welcome Larry and are confident that his experience in international affairs will allow him to be an integral voice in our deliberations."

Eagleburger served as the 62nd U.S. Secretary of State under President George H.W. Bush. A career diplomat, Eagleburger held numerous high-ranking positions in the presidential administrations of both Republicans and Democrats. Eagleburger has received a number of awards for his government service including, in 1992, the Department of State's Distinguished Service Award -- the department's highest honor. In 1994, he received an honorary knighthood from Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II.

Currently, Eagleburger is chairman of the International Commission on Holocaust Era Insurance Claims.

The study group, comprised of five Democrats and five Republicans, was created in March 2006 to conduct a forward-looking, bi-partisan assessment of the situation on the ground in Iraq, its impact on the surrounding region, and consequences for U.S.

interests. The study group was assembled at the urging of members of Congress and was welcomed by President George W. Bush.

The other members of the study group include Vernon E. Jordan, Jr., Edwin Meese III, Sandra Day O'Connor, Leon J. Panetta, William J. Perry, Charles S. Robb, and Alan K. Simpson.

For more information on the Iraq Study Group, go to www.usip.org

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