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BY DANIEL F. GILMORE

WASHINGTON (UPI) -- THE WHITE HOUSE HAS SELECTED JOHN MCMAHON, A VETERAN INTELLIGENCE PROFESSIONAL, TO TAKE OVER THE NO. 2 SPOT IN THE CIA, ADMINISTRATION SOURCES SAID MONDAY.

MCMAHON, 52, A CIA OFFICIAL FOR 31 YEARS AND ITS CURRENT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, WILL REPLACE HIGHLY REGARDED ADM. BOBBY RAY INMAN WHO RESIGNED AS DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE AGENCY TO SEEK A NEW CAREER IN CIVILIAN LIFE.

IT WAS CLEAR THE ADMINISTRATION NEEDED OUTSPOKEN CONGRESSIONAL ADVICE THAT CAPITOL HILL WOULD INSIST ON A "FIRST RATE REPLACEMENT" FOR INMAN IN VIEW OF ITS LESS THAN ENTHUSIASTIC SUPPORT FOR CIA DIRECTOR WILLIAM CASEY, WHO IS REGARDED AS A POLITICAL, RATHER THAN PROFESSIONAL, APPOINTMENT.

THE FINAL CHOICE WAS SAID TO HAVE NARROWED BETWEEN MCMAHON AND GEN. LEW ALLEN, THE AIR FORCE CHIEF OF STAFF WHO IS RETIRING FROM THAT POST IN JUNE.

MCMAHON APPARENTLY WON HANDS DOWN IN VIEW OF HIS IMPRESSIVE INTELLIGENCE BACKGOUND AND HIS WIDE SUPPORT ON CAPITOL HILL.

"MR. MCMAHON WAS THE ONLY, AND I REPEAT, ONLY, APPOINTMENT I WOULD HAVE FOUND ACCEPTABLE," SAID SEN. DANIEL PATRICK MOYNIHAN, D-N.Y., WHO IS VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE.

MCMAHON, CURRENTLY NO. 3 IN THE CIA HIERACHY, HAS SERVED IN EVERY IMPORTANT DEPARTMENT OF THE AGENCY, IN THE FIELD OVERSEAS AND FOR A PERIOD IN 1977-78 AS ACTING DEPUTY DIRECTOR.

PRESIDENT REAGAN WILL HAVE TO SUBMIT MCMAHON'S NOMINATION TO THE SENATE FOR CONFIRMATION, NOW EXPECTED TO BE A FORMALITY.

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