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(Neb.)-Hagel Pick Tests Senate On Presidential Choices



By: Roxie Graham-Marski Posted at: 01/18/2013 09:13 AM

WASHINGTON (AP) - In the middle of a bitter fight over a Republican president's nominee for defense secretary, a former White House occupant pleaded with senators to give the president his choice for the Pentagon job.

The year was 1989, the former president was Richard Nixon, and the nominee to lead the Defense Department was former Sen. John Tower. Back then, Nixon said the Senate should respect the right of a new president to choose those he believes are best qualified to serve in his Cabinet - unless there is conclusive evidence against the nominee.

Today, a similar debate is playing out as some senators oppose President Barack Obama's nominee to lead the Pentagon, former Sen. Chuck Hagel.

In 1989, Tower lost the argument. The Senate rejected his nomination.