

Bush Says CIA Vital To Freedom

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George W. Bush, director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), said Sunday that the CIA is "vital to freedom" because it provides the information needed to avoid warfare, political upheavals and major calamities around the world.

Bush became CIA director six weeks ago and said his speech at Guilford Courthouse National Military Park here gave him his first opportunity to defend the CIA against outspoken critics who recently called attention to some of the agency's abuses and blunders.

The CIA director was keynote speaker for colorful ceremonies on the eve of the 195th anniversary of the Battle of Guilford Courthouse. He said intelligence-gatherers similar to those in the CIA were active in the Revolutionary War and today's agents are demonstrating the same kind of unselfish loyalty shown by soldiers so many years ago on the battlefield here.

The CIA is being reorganized and an "oversight board" will assure that its agents will never again be involved in such abuses as planned assassinations of foreign leaders, Bush added. He said he doesn't condone abuses but the CIA put an end to these abuses before President Gerald Ford handed down an executive order against them.

"The CIA and the entire intelligence community is under control," said Bush. He added that all of his employees will follow the guidelines laid down by Ford.

Bush said he made a pledge to the President, congress and senate that he would end CIA abuses and maintain the CIA as the best possible intelligence-gathering organization.

He said some oversight, such as that planned by the congress, is necessary

but it is also necessary for the public to put "some degree" of trust in the nation's intelligence-gathering organizations.

The crowd applauded loud and long when Bush said the CIA won't abandon its secrecy. "You can't conduct an intelligence operation in the open," he added. There was more applause when he said "the American people don't want a reckless exposure" of the identities of CIA agents and what they are doing.

Acknowledging public anger and doubts about CIA involvement in recent controversies, Bush said, "When the furor is over, the vast majority of Americans will support the need for secrecy" in the agency's work.

The CIA continues unshaken by all the controversy and is providing "valid information" so the nation's policy-makers can react wisely when foreign intrigue, buildups of arsenals and missile installations and other dangerous happenings threaten the security of the free world, he added.

He said the CIA has been highly successful in its struggle against hijackings, the international drug traffic, efforts of some nations to raise prices in such a way as to endanger the world's economy and to spread communism, terrorism and disruptions around the globe.

The nation's "intelligence-gathering community" has been badly harmed during the past year by the investigations and disclosures of the identity of some agents, said Bush. But the CIA's successes come when it "aborts crises, and you don't hear about them," he added.

Bush said the CIA is conducting intelligence-gathering operations "not to weaken, but to strengthen our country."

He said the nation's intelligence-gathering community is "unlike those recklessly disclosing the identities of CIA agents."

Richard Welch's son displayed a loyalty and pride after his CIA agent father's identity was disclosed in Greece, where the elder Welch was gunned down, "that

tells much about the fiber of our country in 1976," said Bush.

The CIA director said his organization's agents have impressed him with their competence and dedication. He noted that more than 900 CIA agents have earned Ph.D. degrees which would enable them to earn much more money and live more comfortably.

But the agents are displaying patriotism and service "much like the spirit of those who fought so unselfishly for our freedom 195 years ago on this battlefield," he added.

Bush was introduced by U.S. Rep. Richardson Preyer, D-N.C., who described the battleground here as "the very soil on which the Revolutionary War was won" and added that this nation "wouldn't be entering our third century of freedom without what took place here 195 years ago."

Preyer, Bush and other platform personalities were escorted by a colonial-garbed color guard shouldering muskets and marching to fanfare from the Allen Jay High School Band. Participants in-

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