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SUBJECT State of the CIA - *George Bush*

WALTER CRONKITE: For several years now there's been an almost steady barrage of revelations about allegedly illegal activities of the Central Intelligence Agency.

Well today CIA Director George Bush assured the people who spent their careers with the Agency that the worst is over.

Jim McManus reports.

JIM MCMANUS: The CIA Director told the retired intelligence officers that the backlash of severe criticism that followed Watergate and other spy shop abuses has run its course. He said even college students are once again looking toward careers in intelligence work.

CIA DIRECTOR GEORGE BUSH: I think there was some rash of proposals not so many months ago towards the dismantling of the Central Intelligence Agency. And that storm -- I don't know how serious it was -- but it has been weathered. There is not that kind of irrational discussion going on anymore.

Recruitment is up. And the cynics will say to you, you know, people will work anywhere if unemployment is seven percent or something like that. But they also have a way of measuring quality. We got experts in this personnel thing and they have a way of measuring quality. And the quality of applicants is up.

MCMANUS: Bush said worldwide publicity of intelligence community troubles hurt cooperative relationships with some foreign agencies, but even that problem is passing.

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DIRECTOR BUSH: The people upon whom we depend for the most cooperation around the world continue to work closely with us. But there has been a pulling back in some ways, I think it's getting better.

MCMANUS: Bush said he has faith in sharpened congressional oversight, and the Capitol Hill is no longer looking for a CIA corruption, but now asks, how can we help make things work better?

Jim McManus, CBS News, Reston, Virginia.