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Address to Houston YMCA

L1 May ⁷ 1976

L2 Address, Houston, Texas

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GEORGE BUSH: Thank you, Ed, for that very warm introduction, and I really can't tell you how pleased Barbara and I are to be home in Houston. It's not that I'm -- it's not just that I'm glad to be out of Washington. I'm delighted, really, to be back, the first time that we've had a chance to be in our hometown since we left for Peking in the fall of 1974.

I feel at home here. I believe in the work of the YMCA. I was active in Midland, Texas in the founding of the Y out there, I've participated here. I can attest that what Ed told you is true about Carl Walker. Riding along, minding my own business in the Forbidden City in downtown Peking, and the messenger hands you a note: "Your a month behind payment for the Century Club in the South-central Branch of the Houston YMCA." I think that's going a little far. But we've got a place for Carl in our organization, I think.

~~[Laughter]~~

It's kind of like the guy -- when Barbara and I were up and living in splendor as your representative at the United Nations, living high atop the Waldorf Hotel in 42A, which is the Embassy of the United States to the United Nations. Came out, saw this guy dragging a mongrel dog along, right across from 50th Street there, heading over towards Madison Square Garden.

I said, "Where you going with the dog?"

He said, "Well, I'm taking him over to enter him in the pet show in Madison Square Garden."

I said, "Well, that's the world champion show. Do you think he's going to win anything?"

He said, "No, I don't expect he's going to win anything, but he's going to be in some damn fine company."

~~[Laughter]~~

And that's the way I feel about being here tonight. A lot of people from the Y, a lot of people from the Breakfast Club that I used to attend with great regularity and affection, and I do feel at home here. And somebody at a press conference, you know, asked me the inevitable question this evening about: "Well, what'll you do if the President or the next President or the present President doesn't want you to continue in what you're doing?"

I said, "Well, I'll do what anybody else does that's appointed to serve at the pleasure of the President. Whether this

President's elected or another President's elected, I'll submit my resignation; and if he accepts it, I'll be very happy, 'cause I'll move back here to Sage Road and go to work for Carl Walker, and I think we'll have a good -- good -- good life." And I really mean that.

And so, I am very pleased to be here tonight. I want to talk to you a little bit about the Central Intelligence Agency. It's not altogether unrelated to YMCA work, and I'll try to make that point later. But I'd like to talk to you about it as it is, not as people sometimes think it is. I read all kinds of stories about stuff that the Central Intelligence Agency is involved in, and I immediately go to my office, a very efficient one: "Please check this out."

Now, with me tonight is one of our press officers, and he gets many more of these stories than I get, and he was telling me about one that is really true -- the story is true; the facts are not -- about what we were blamed for. He got a frantic call from the West, and they said, "We would like you to verify this story about the Central Intelligence Agency. We're very upset about it."

And our man said, "Well, yes, sir. What can I do for you?"

He said, "Well, we understand that three humanoids landed in the desert in Nevada and that they were met there by a CIA agent who took them to Elgin [sic] Air Force Base, where they were frozen and put on ice. And they got unfrozen three days later and died.

"Now, did you or did you not do this?"

Mr. Perrin said, "No, we did not freeze three humanoids."

But then the question is, you know, "Well, did they land in the desert?" And we end up going through all kinds of peculiar things.

There was another guy -- and these are true stories -- that was making \$150 a lecture, lecturing on the West Coast, advertising himself as a former hired killer for the CIA. And he went on to tell about a real weird tale of how he'd been hired to kill people in the Soviet Union. And somebody from the crowd held up his hand and said, "How did you get out of the Soviet Union?"

He said, "Well, I didn't have dollars; I used my American Express card," left the Soviet Union, and then was telling his tales on the West Coast.

And it's one darn story like that after another. And so

tonight I want to talk to you in a reasonably brief period of time, you'll be happy to know, about the Central Intelligence Agency, as I've found it in the period of time that I've been there.

In the first place, we're in an age-old business. Perhaps -- I say perhaps -- the oldest profession in the world. Some have suggested the second-oldest profession, but perhaps the oldest profession in the world.

Kung Chiu writing in China in 500 B.C., a book called "The Art of War," which is small enough to recommend it to friends, talked about an army without secret agents is like a man without eyes and ears. And he went on to say that the supreme art of war is to subdue the enemy without fighting. And it goes on to describe in considerable detail methodology of intelligence, that could have been written within the last few years.

So, first, we're in an age-old business.

Secondly, we're an agency that, let's face it, has taken a tremendous battering. Tonight I want to give you just a few examples of damage to the intelligence community. I present them not to discourage you from -- or, make you feel that the CIA is on the ropes, but I'm continually asked, "Has all this publicity really hurt our necessary intelligence capability?"

And the answer has got to be, in all fairness, "Yes, it's hurt us somewhat.

While the extent of deterioration in relationships with foreign intelligence organizations is -- it's hard to assess it, U.S. officers are convinced that foreign intelligence agencies with which we've had close relationships in the past are holding back on certain sensitive information rather than risk its exposure in the United States.

Another example: A senior African security service officer told a CIA representative that allegations about CIA involvement in coup conspiracies were convincing officials in his own government that the CIA was behind every coup attempt in the world.

Liaison services in four Latin American countries have cited leaks about the CIA as an excuse for offering less cooperation with our government than in the past.

In the Middle East and Southeast Asia there have been explicit reflections in recent months from four intelligence services with which we have liaison relationships of deep concern about whether the CIA adequately can protect the fact that these covert relationships exist.

And so, the full-trust nature of these relationships,

hopefully temporarily, has indeed been adversely affected.

And the fifth one: A ranking East European, Iron Country, East European official who's been a secret agent since 1972 has refused to continue his collaboration on the grounds of excessive publicity about the Central Intelligence Agency.

An African service refused to initiate a joint operation with CIA as a direct result of leaks and disclosures of activities.

And the seventh example: Exposures naming companies and business leaders who have cooperated with the CIA have created an unwillingness on the part of those individuals to assist the agency confidentially, for fear such association will be exposed in the press.

And then, two companies who've been providing material for the CIA over the years, business people coming back from trips debriefing CIA, recently advised the agency that they no longer care to do business with the Central Intelligence Agency.

These are just a few examples of where, perhaps, our capability, which I happen to think is vital to our national security, where our capability has been damaged.

Thirdly, we're an agency that, in spite of this, has had some amazing successes. And you hear about, over the last 18 months, the failures, but you don't hear about the intelligence successes. Some of it is because I am charged, under the 1947 act, with the protection of sources and methods of intelligence, and some of it is because it's kind of like reading about all the banks that weren't robbed today. You read about the ones that were robbed, you read about the sensationalism, you read about the stuff that's gone wrong, but you don't read about the quiet successes; and I do want to mention just a few to put in balance the damage versus the ongoing mission of the agency.

I wish we could list the most spectacular successes, but we simply can't do it, because disclosure would give away sources and methods. But just a couple of examples.

We have closely followed the Soviet ICBM design and development activities over the past two decades. There have been several new ICBMs developed during the past decade, and we've been able to detect the development of each about three years before it became operational. And moreover, well before they became operational, the principal technical characteristics of these weapons were established and the information was provided to the policymakers in our government.

Technical selection devices have enabled us not only to monitor development of these ICBMs, but also to keep track of

Soviet missile deployment with great accuracy and to predict when various sites would become operational and to predict the size of the force one or two years in advance.

We identified and followed the development of the Soviet ABM, anti-ballistic missile system, at Moscow before it became operational, and individual ABM radars were identified in the early phase of their construction several years before they became operational.

At least one foreign leader, no particular friend of the United States, alive today because the CIA warned him of a plot against his life.

A number of hijackings and other terrorist actions abroad have been thwarted because we were able to give timely and accurate intelligence to local authorities. And we've been able to bring about the arrest of narcotics traffickers abroad and the seizure of major narcotics shipments.

Trade [unintelligible]. Giving early warning long before the fact of what OPEC planned to do in terms of economic boycott and in terms of price increases that would damage the Free World in some way.

And the pendulum of public opinion now seems to be swinging back, fortunately, on the Central Intelligence Agency and there seems to be a fundamental recognition in this country that we've got to have a capability that is second to none.

You know, many people in our country really have no concept about what our mission is. People are frightened, because of some of the things that were clearly wrong in the past, about our agency. Everybody that calls me up on the telephone to play tennis, have lunch, the perfectly normal things -- CIA people do these kinds of things -- work in Little Leagues, work in the YMCA. People call up and they always keep saying to me, "Who's on the phone with us?" You know, "How many people are listening in?" And I'm getting tired of it. I've never seen such a decent group of people as I work with. And you're an agency with a vitally important mission.

Let me just tick off a few of the past, and you ask yourselves, as I tell you, did you know that this agency was involved in this kind of thing? I know you know we were involved in making Fidel Castro's beard drop off, or some kind of a peculiar aberration that was wrong and that's been corrected, a few examples of things that went wrong over a long, long period of time.

I don't know whether you think nuclear proliferation is important. I'm scared to death about it. I think it's terrible. The CIA has a tremendous, tremendously vital role in letting our President, the Congress, the policymakers know what's happening in

terms of nuclear proliferation in the world.

Political change: sometimes our business, sometimes not our business, particularly, but something that our policymakers must know about.

Terrorism I mentioned.

What branch of the U.S. Government concerns itself about hijackings abroad? Maybe you feel we shouldn't be. I think we should. I think we should help our fellow man try to abort this move towards anarchy when a terrorist takes the law into his own hands, and CIA has a vital role in trying to contain terrorism.

The same thing for the international movement of drugs. The same thing about averting war through early knowledge, so that the policymakers can take some statistics and take some information and use it to confront governments with, not to further the interest of the United States, necessarily, but to protect the peace.

In the recent troubles in the Middle East, and they're not over by a long shot, the intelligence on how many Syrian troops crossed into Lebanon came from my agency, and we did a first class job on it, and we could tell the President of the United States, almost to the hour, of what the presence was in another country of troops from Syria.

An overt -- an overt capability: We've got the best cartologists in the United States Government and in the United States. Cartologists, they make maps, for those of you who didn't know what that means. And it's an overt capa -- if you want to get a good map and you've got a buck-and-a-half on you, write to CIA, and it'll say CIA, and they're the best. And our cartologists have been recognized by people in that business as the very tops in the field.

Economic intelligence: The grain crops in the Soviet Union. Our intelligence is fundamental to what the economic pressures are going to be, what the demands from other countries on this country are going to be.

Factual questions: How many Cubans are operating in Angola today? Where are they going to go when they leave Angola? Are they going back to Cuba, or are they going over into Mozambique and to Somalia and to Guinea and some other place in Africa? I think it's a very important question, and it's a question that our agency is charged with answering to the best of our ability.

The change in China that took place over the last month. Vitally important, not only to the security, eventually, of the United States, but to the security of our NATO allies. Where is

China going to go? Are they going to get back in bed with the Soviet Union? And if they do, what does that mean to Japan, for example? What does that mean to our NATO allies, if the Soviet Union doesn't have to concern itself about the Chinese-Russia border, it can shift its intention to NATO?

These are fundamental questions and they're questions that affect the life of every American, if not today, tomorrow, if the answer comes out wrong. And our agency is involved in getting this kind of information to present to the policymakers.

So, we're an agency with a vitally important mission. We're an agency with great human assets. We have several hundred Ph.D.s -- many hundreds, I'd say, Ph.D.s and M.A.s, space scientists, aerodynamic engineers, psychologists, political scientists, economists, agronomists, linguists, historians. We've even got a barbershop, got a cafeteria -- I think I need to go there -- we've got a barbershop, cafeteria, and, as I mentioned, we've just got plain citizens that kind of go about their daily lives. They're not sneaking around, spying on people, and they do a first class job.

And we've got some brave people there, brave men and women. Our operations people abroad, given the unreal climate in which they've been asked to operate, they stay steadfast.

And Barbara and I took a recent trip to Europe and we saw some of them, talked to the families, talked to the wives. And I came back and I asked myself this question: What can I do to make the American people understand and appreciate the sacrifice and the patriotism of these people. As this vicious practice of exposing names goes on, the lives of these decent Americans is in jeopardy. And yet they don't complain, and they and their families have this deep inner feeling that they're giving something vital to the Free World. They don't get any medals, they don't take any bows, and their motivation, just like the motivation we saw here tonight, is service and dedication to country, dedication to country and to the principle of freedom as the matrix that joins all these people together.

And so what do we do about it all? In the first place, we conduct our business recognizing that we are operating in changed circumstances. We consult, in the last quarter century, much more closely with the Congress of the United States, and thus with the people. We will cooperate with Congress, but Congress has got to recognize that it must protect the agency's intelligence secrets.

In addition, we operate within the laws of the United States. We stay in the foreign intelligence business and we go about the surveilling domestically and the things that got this agency into trouble in the past. If we find a mess in our house, we clean it up and we report it, under the President's Executive

Order.

We've got to change our way of dealing with the public. We've got to be more open in helping people understand what CIA does.

But having said these things, we've got to do some other things, too.

We protect the lives of our people by fighting to keep secret those things that must be kept secret. I am not going to reveal the name of our agents, the names of people that have helped us in the past, or the names of people who are helping us in the present or in the future.

When I came to CIA, because of my concern about First Amendment rights, I made a decision that we would not use U.S. journalists on a paid or contractual basis -- freedom of the press, the Constitution. I made a decision that we would not use church people, on a similar basis -- freedom of religion, constitutional problem. The policy was changed and the cloud removed for now and for the future.

And yet some people are now insisting that I give them the names of those who helped CIA in the past. Well, they're simply not going to get those names.

We are, at times, in a tough and dangerous business, and the people with whom we deal, past, present or future, must know that we're not going to expose them to danger and that we are not going to betray a trust, and that we will, in short, keep our word.

Let me end on a personal note. A couple of weeks ago I was talking to the daughter of a friend of ours who had -- this girl had just graduated from college, and she was job hunting, and she was talking to me about the CIA.

Incidentally, our recruitment is up. Some cynics say, "Well, of course, anybody's recruitment is up when you've got 7.5% unemployment. Of course you're going to have more applicants." It's more than that, though, because our people have a way of comparing quality, through certain kinds of testing, today with what it was, say, 10 years ago, and the quality, as measured in these so hopefully scientific fashion, is clearly up.

But anyway, as sensitive and bright kids do, this young girl raised the question to me of the morality of the business that I'm involved in. And all of you who have teenaged kids in this place that works, and dedicated staff that spends so much of your lives devoted to shaping the lives of young kids, you know what I am talking about when I talk about how this younger generation compels us older people to address ourselves to the question

of morality.

And indeed, I told her that, given the emotions of the past year, this question of morality is a question that clearly I had to wrestle with when I was riding my bicycle peacefully along on a Sunday morning, having come from a church -- and they do have Christian churches in -- a Christian church in Peking. Barbara and I will never forget it. We were riding back, and one of our couriers or messengers stopped us and asked us to ride on down to the Liaison Office, and gave me this telegram saying that the President of the United States wanted me to come back and head the Central Intelligence Agency.

And I -- as I talked to this young kid, having told her that I had wrestled with this question of the morality of it all, I found that it wasn't too easy a question to handle. I have it sorted out in my mind, but I found myself somewhat inarticulate in expressing it to her. Because there are some grubby things in this business, not many, not near as many as you'd think from reading the sensationalism of the past, but there are some. And there's something less than lovely for Americans about having to do certain things in secret, having to deceive, having to spy.

But to me -- and I tried to explain this to her -- this unloveliness is all over -- in the first place, it's a small part of our mission, the operational side, a tiny part of the great asset that is CIA. But it's all overridden, for me, by my total conviction that if freedom is to survive in a world where our adversaries, dedicated to world socialism, dedicated to world communism, where they're penetrating every country in the world, large and small, we better have a strong intelligence capability.

And I quoted to her Horace Mann: "Be ashamed to die until you have won some victory for humanity."

Now, I know that some, in the climate of the past, would question whether working in intelligence is indeed a -- could be considered a victory for humanity. I am convinced that it can be. I feel dedicated to being sure we operate within the law, but I also feel dedicated to keeping our capability second to none.

I spent a fantastic 14 months with Bar in the Peoples Republic of China, and now I'm back. And I loved every minute of our time there. And though I give them enormous....

[End of recording]