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U.S. need for CIA se great

By S.M. KHALID
Staff reporter

Political terrorism, simmering regional disputes around the globe and recent losses of classified information to the Russians prove the United States needs the Central Intelligence Agency more than ever, a noted intelligence scholar said Saturday.

"The need for more intelligence and better intelligence was never greater," Williams College professor Russell H. Bossert told an afternoon gathering of alumni at the Wilmington Country Club.

Bossert, a Stansfield Professor of History and noted scholar on intelligence gathering, declared his support for covert action by the CIA as the "best chance for stability" in promoting regional peace in Central America and the Middle East.

"The American public and the press have a hell of a lot to learn about being confronted with nasty choices," declared Bossert. "We live in a world where you may have to execute a lesser evil to prevent a greater one. There are no obvious or easy choices."

He added that covert programs, such as CIA support for anti-government groups in Nicaragua and Afghanistan, were a new method of containing Soviet global influence. He portrayed this as the best alternative between diplomacy and war.

Bossert supported the Nicaraguan contras fighting to topple the Sandinista government. "They [Sandinistas] are hard-core Marxists who believe in spreading their revolution across their borders," he said.

Bossert gave President Reagan high marks for improving morale within the CIA by appointing current chief William Casey.

Borrowing from a theme first advanced by President John F. Kennedy, Bossert said the U.S. is now facing a "twilight world," one knowing neither peace nor war, and that the CIA would prove invaluable in plotting a safe political course.

"Like Britain after World War II," he said, "we have too many obligations and too many places and we need to get rid of them, but not at a high cost."

While Bossert cited cases where the CIA had made "poor decisions" in the past, he claimed that investigations by Congress and the agency itself had proven that "the CIA is not a rogue elephant, set out on the street."

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