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NEW YORK (AP) - SOME PEOPLE USE TRAVEL AGENTS. LOWELL THOMAS USES THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY.

THE WRITER, NEWS COMMENTATOR AND EXPLORER SAID TUESDAY HIS RECENT HONEYMOON IN TIBET WAS ARRANGED BY THE CIA AT THE SUGGESTION OF GEORGE BUSH. BUSH, FORMER U.S. DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATIVE IN PEKING, WAS THE CIA'S DIRECTOR DURING THE ADMINISTRATION OF RICHARD M. NIXON.

THOMAS, 85, HAD NOT BEEN TO TIBET SINCE BEFORE WORLD WAR II. HE INTRODUCED A GROUP OF FRIENDS AT A LUNCHEON TO JIM LILLEY, WHOM HE SAID WAS ''THE CIA AGENT IN CHARGE OF TIBET.''

LILLEY ''ARRANGED THE WHOLE THING,'' THOMAS SAID.

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BUT IN HOUSTON, BUSH SAID WEDNESDAY THE CIA HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THE TRIP.

''THE TRIP WAS ARRANGED IN MY PRIVATE CAPACITY WITH NO CIA ASSISTANCE WHATEVER,'' BUSH SAID. ''MY CONCERNS ARE DIPLOMATIC. IT DOESN'T HELP TO HAVE THIS BEING SAID WHEN IT IS NOT TRUE.''

BUSH SAID HE WAS INVITED BACK TO CHINA AS A GUEST OF THE CHINESE PEOPLE'S INSTITUTE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

''BARBARA (BUSH'S WIFE) AND I WERE INVITED AND THEY SAID BRING SOME OTHER PEOPLE AND THAT'S THE WAY THE WHOLE THING CAME ABOUT,'' BUSH SAID.

''I DON'T THINK LOWELL THOMAS SAID THAT BECAUSE IT DOESN'T HAPPEN TO BE TRUE. HE WAS INVITED BY ME AND THE ITINERARY, INCLUDING TIBET, AND NOTHING ABOUT THE TRIP, HAD ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE CIA.''

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