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Spies out in the light for Reagan bill-signing

BY A WASHINGTON TIMES STAFF WRITER

President Reagan was able to slip into the grounds of the Central Intelligence Agency by helicopter yesterday and sign a bill designed to protect the identity of its extremely secret agents.

The visit gave Reagan and a few members of the press a rare opportunity to observe carefully the campus-like atmosphere of the agency as well as actually see thousands of spies sitting on a hillside, their features sharply delineated in a bright, morning sun.

Normally, spies only appear at Washington cocktail parties in subdued lighting.

They were gathered in the sun in a natural amphitheater to hear the president and watch him sign the bill into law. The legislation provides a \$50,000 fine and a 10-year prison term for government employees who have had authorized access to the names of covert agents and then divulge them. For those outside of government — scholars and reporters included — conviction could bring a \$15,000 fine and a four-year sentence.

The measure makes it a crime to disclose the name of a covert agent even if the information is obtained from public records.

The agency is located somewhere above the Potomac River on a road which leads, eventually, to Mount Vernon.

Visitors yesterday noted a number of dying trees in the parking lots, a barbed wire fence,

the Army Band in concert before noon and a remarkable resemblance between CIA employees and those who labor in the Commerce Department downtown.

The president spoke in secret to agency officials inside the headquarters building — wherever that might be — and then burst out from the cold and made a speech.

He was received enthusiastically — spies can melt into a crowd by applauding with everyone else — and he said he was speaking to heroes.

"These men and women," Reagan said, "these heroes of a grim twilight struggle are those of you who serve here in the Central Intelligence Agency."

"We are grateful to you," he said at another point. "We thank you. We are proud of you."

The president said enactment of the Intelligence Identities Protection Act is "clear evidence of the value this nation places on its intelligence agencies and their personnel. It is a vote of confidence."

Reagan warned that the era ahead is "fraught with danger." He told the spies: "History shows that it is precisely when totalitarian regimes begin to decay from within, it is precisely when they feel the first stirrings of domestic unrest that they seek to reassure their own people of their vast and unchallengeable power through imperialistic

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