

Speech
Speech not Recorded

Director of Central Intelligence

at the

Kennebunk-Kennebunkport

Chamber of Commerce

September 1, 1976

George Bush, the Director of Central Intelligence, said today that secrecy is as important to intelligence as effective accountability and oversight.

In an informal address to the Kennebunk-Kennebunkport (Me.) Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Bush said: "I challenge those who claim that secrecy in intelligence work is inconsistent with freedom and democracy to give us a realistic preview of what this nation's freedom and democracy would look like if we alone in this imperfect world decided to abandon this essential protection against our adversaries."

"We now have a fully effective oversight mechanism defined by the President's Executive Order of last February and comprehensive accountability to the Congress," Mr. Bush said, "and we are committed to making these procedures work. What we do not have is a fully effective way of protecting the secrets that are -- like oversight and accountability -- an essential element of this nation's intelligence."

He was alluding to sensationalist public disclosures of names of intelligence officers and intelligence operations in the wake of the recent Congressional investigations.

"I do not take issue with the need for investigating and correcting past errors," Mr. Bush said, "but I will oppose forever those who seek to destroy us outright and ~~with~~ those

who, in the name of informing and protecting the public, hunt for yet another headline even if it be at the expense of American lives and of our national security."

Mr. Bush also took issue with what he called "fictional notions of what intelligence is all about." "I realize that dirty-tricks artist James Bond is far more fascinating than a scholarly analyst of foreign political or economic trends," Mr. Bush said, "but in seven months as Director of Central Intelligence, I have never met anyone remotely like James Bond. Yet, during any lunchtime visit to our Headquarters cafeteria, I may be sharing the room with enough scholars and scientists who hold enough advanced degrees in enough disciplines to staff a university."

He described modern intelligence as "much more than the sometimes romanticized and often misunderstood clandestine work."

"Modern intelligence," he said, "is the gathering of information both open and hidden, the transformation of that information into knowledge, and the conversion of that knowledge into a finished product that represents the best possible tool the nation's policymakers can use in their deliberations and decisions."

Contrary to public belief, Mr. Bush said, this process requires the painstaking and sometimes even tedious work of "a great and dedicated corps of thoughtful and scholarly experts."

Mr. Bush, a former Congressman from Texas, noted that he himself has been a user of the intelligence product as ambassador to the United Nations and as U.S. representative in Peking.

"I have found that product to be excellent," he said. "And I continue to think that it is entirely consistent with our nation's desire for peace and security that we must have and that we do have intelligence second to none in the world."