

George Bush

Director of Central Intelligence

before the

Comstock Club

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Thank you Sandy for that very warm introduction. In this job, running I guess the world's largest, maybe not, certainly I think the world's best intelligence service, you're kind of walking a fine line between doing some public speaking and trying not to do too much. I do a lot more than Mr. Andropov, who is head of the KGB but a lot less than I was used to in some of my previous incarnations and that's the way it should be. I will say that when I was invited -- I can't remember who to blame, whether it was Judge McBride or Brian VanCamp for inviting me in the first place -- to come to the Comstock Club where I felt very honored. I have wanted to do this and of course I am very, very pleased to be here before one of this nation's most prestigious forums. I do appreciate the warm introduction. Sandy, if I would be permitted one personal note, I referred to the fact that I was an airplane pilot in WW II and just a little while ago, we had a squadron of 15 torpedo pilots in the Pacific and little did I realize that Lou Grab, who is here today, principal of one of your schools here in Sacramento, was one of my fellow pilots on that squadron. So I have a real personal pleasure seeing this guy, after some, I hate to tell you how many years, I think it's about 32 years. Both of us were scared to death most of the time but he looks like he is doing very well over there.

You may have seen the announcement that I won't be in the job as Director of Central Intelligence very long and I, of course, won't be alone in the unemployment field. Some

of you may remember Norris Cotton...(joke).

I don't fear the future at all and I have had one hell of a past and the most interesting part of it has been the last year when I've been Director of Central Intelligence. I wanted to talk to you a little bit and try to answer or dodge your questions, depending which seems most appropriate, after I have finished. I say that not altogether facetiously because some of them I'm not going to discuss foreign policy and I am not going to discuss sources and methods of intelligence and the reason I am not going to discuss them is because the law in 1947 said to the Director of Central Intelligence, protect sources and methods, and don't go talking at the Comstock Club or someplace else about them and so if you are frustrated in your inability to get an answer from me on a matter on where I feel I will be violating that law, so be it, and I hope you will be somewhat understanding.

We have in the lobby of the CIA, one of our many lobbies there, a group of portraits of my predecessors and I was nostalgically walking by those illustrious gentlemen the other day, their pictures, and I got thinking to myself of the enormous differences between the role of Director of Central Intelligence in 1976 and the problems facing my predecessors, say 10, 15 or 20 years ago and they are great differences. and there is a whole new ingredient involved in this job and that ingredient has to do with battling the myths about the Central Intelligence Agency. People think of us as James Bond, and all these scary, exotic kinds of things.

They think that we overthrew the government in Chile. The hearings showed that that was not true but if I read that one time in the leftist journals I have read it many times. People have tried to link us to the Lockheed scandal and we're not involved. People have tried to link us to the death of Letelier in Washington awhile back, we're not involved. Fidel Castro got his story about our being involved in the crashing of the plane in Barbados printed all over the U.S. and this Agency is not involved. Then we were accused awhile back, not altogether facetiously, by some nut of capturing two humanoids in the desert of Nevada and putting them on ice and then releasing them later on. We did not capture two humanoids in the desert of Nevada nor are we the custodian of the relics of Noah's Ark, which we are accused of being, and so there is a new dimension to this job and we are now a target. The attacks come, some from the far left. I read this morning until it threatened to ruin my breakfast a publication called Counterspy, a vicious mean little journal. Fortunately it is largely unread in this country but it is printed in this country. There are less sinister people who find that in this nutty climate we are in that you can put the initials CIA almost next to any allegation and get them printed. We have seen Castro accuse the Agency very recently of six different things that weren't true. There is a book out now by the Soviets called The CIA Through the Eyes of Americans, and I brought a little Russian from Pravda and a little interpretation of it starting off, "not far from the American capital in the quiet

town of Langley, the headquarters of CIA, is located on the marble plaque in the hall of the main building are engraved the words, 'you will know the truth and the truth will make you free'", and they are there and we are very proud of that. And today when the world learns about the many new facts of indecent activities of the Agency this bible piety of Langley is understood completely differently. This is the Soviet official line printed in Pravda, circulated across, as far as their communication system will present it to go. Unless, you think that piece that came out in March 25 this year was alone, here is one I just picked up from our office dated November 25, by the Soviets, Moscow Radio Peace and Progress in English. This one was funneled to all of Asia and let me just read you the first paragraph of this:

"The exposures of the subversive activities of the United States CIA in different countries of the world and the discrediting of that espionage Agency not only in the eyes of the American public but also in the eyes of the world public compel its present and previous leaders to search for a new name for the CIA."

Now this is the Soviets capitalizing on our own excesses and we've seen the same thing coming out of Cuba taking some of the hearings of last year, twisting them around and funneling them all through Latin America. And so we are up not against just idealistic people who want to see changes in ... and the

handful of abuses of the past corrected. We are up against forces much more sinister, much more dedicated to the downfall of one of the foremost assets that this nation has and that is the foreign intelligence capability second to none. And so we are a target by these various groups and the ones that trouble me the most however, the exposés that trouble me the most are the ones that expose the names of CIA people willing in this troubled climate to serve their country abroad. And when I see a book or article that deliberately exposes our operations in relations with other governments, that deliberately names our people and their contacts, I have nothing but contempt for those authors. Nothing could be more damaging to the interests of our nation, and of our national security than this kind of irresponsible exposure. Unfortunately, I have found that our laws are regrettably weak in being able to do something about those that would risk the lives of CIA people serving abroad by exposing their names. Secrecy is required to protect our methods, our officers serving abroad and their contacts in foreign land and to protect our relationships with friendly foreign intelligence services. But 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 decided to abandon this essential protection against our adversaries. We recognize

at the same time that along with secrecy, accountability is important, accountability to the President, accountability to the Congress, accountability to the people. We've got to replace this suspicion with trust and I want to assure you that loyal Americans in our intelligence agencies are conscious of these responsibilities. We are indeed accountable to the elected representatives of the American people. Last winter, the President promulgated a new Executive Order -- the major restructuring of the foreign intelligence capabilities of the United States since 1947. We are following that Executive Order to the letter. There is an intelligence oversight board where if anybody perceives or thinks he sees something wrong, he can go directly without going through the Director of Central Intelligence or any superiors to this board for action. We've expanded our Inspector General area to do a self-policing job. We have expanded our Office of General Counsel both in the CIA and my responsibilities as Director of Central Intelligence for those defense elements that play such an important part in the whole intelligence community. We have very thorough Congressional oversight. I report to seven different committees of the U.S. Congress. I've made in the seven months that the Congress was in session that I was Director, I made something like 40 separate appearances on Capitol Hill, official appearances. That doesn't count the times when you are up there negotiating with the chairman or the ranking members or whatever it may be. There is adequate oversight, there is a myth abroad that nobody knows how much money except for the

Director and maybe the President how much money the CIA spent. Every single penny of the intelligence community budget and every single penny of the CIA budget is reported to the proper committees of Congress and they are not going to be as long as I am Director, reported to the people because I don't believe that you can lay out the innermost secret details of our intelligence and still have an intelligence capability that is meaningful and both houses of Congress voted 2 to 1 to have us report to the committees but not make these budget figures public. And that's the way it is and that's the way I believe it should be.

So to summarize -- the problem is how to deal with some of the lives that we encounter that came as I indicated from some of these publications, like Counterspy, how to deal with plain false stories that are not maliciously conceived. When laying them to rest, often can only be done through disclosing highly sensitive information. That's the dilemma that I find myself in as Director of Central Intelligence and it is not an easy one to answer.

Now I have dwelled on some of the myths, some of the problems we have today that did not necessarily confront my predecessors yesterday but lest I leave you with the wrong impression the myths are only a part of it. That's the bad news, you might say and the good news though is here as well. The Central Intelligence Agency is strong; recruitment is up and the cynics all say, oh, we've got 7% unemployment, therefore, people would work anywhere. They would go to CIA

or anywhere else. We have a way of measuring quality as anybody does in the personnel business and quality of those dedicated young people I'd say willing to serve their country in this way, that quality is there. And so we continue to attract young people with character, scholarship, ability and I think that this really is the best guarantee that we are going to have an effective and capable intelligence capability in the future. We have recruiters back on the campus. You talk about those who needed combat pay, CIA recruiter going to campus a couple years ago really merited same but now they are back there being civilly received, attentively listened to and doing a first class job. Another good point, frankly, we still provide the policymakers with the best foreign intelligence in the world. You know you read a lot about covert action, Chile, Castro's beard and all these nutty things, some of which were true and wrong, most of which were allegations without any factual base but you hear that. Seven Days of the Condor, CIA people running all around, Robert Redford, Miss Dunaway in New York City knocking each other off, etc. Totally fallacious, targeting the Agency because of this sensationalist climate that we are living in but you don't know about our... what we are doing in the field of international narcotics because it is extremely sensitive, that we have a tremendously useful role to the policymakers in letting them know about the international flow of narcotics around the world. I don't

know whether you care about nuclear proliferation or not. I had a neat Thanksgiving with 4 of my 5 kids and suddenly I started thinking about that kind of thing and I can tell you that this Agency that I proudly head does a very good job informing the President of the United States of who has the nuclear capability and who doesn't and when you think that the technology is such that you can have a nuclear weapon in a brief case, we'd better have a foreign intelligence capability trying to keep up with the movement of nuclear materials around this world. International terrorism, I don't know how many of you travel abroad, or who even think about whether you need to worry about a whole new ingredient, international terrorism, something this country never even thought about ten years ago. But it is my Agency, the intelligence community that has to do the best we can to keep up with this dreadful new weapon that some of the more radical countries have, namely the stimulation of international terrorism. We all want to see peace in this world, we all want to see some agreement, reasonable agreement with the Soviet Union. Until everyone is convinced that nobody is going to lie and nobody is going to come short of the truth, we had better know what the Soviets are doing. We better know how far their missiles can go. We better know how many they've got; we better know what their complying with the SALT agreements and that's

the responsibility of the Director of Central Intelligence to report these things to the President, the Secretary of Defense, Secretary of State. I don't know whether anyone in Sacramento gives a darn about Cubans in Angola; it's a whole new ingredient in foreign policy; it's a whole new phenomenon Cubans spreading out into many countries in Africa. What's it all about? I care about it, the President of the United States cares about it and it is our Agency that is charged with trying to inform the policymakers of not only how many there are in how many countries but what their intent is, what does this new thing mean. Are the Soviets behind it or not, these are the questions we have to answer every single day.

I served a fascinating term as Chief of the United States liaison office in China. I forget who said the Chinese were inscrutable but he was right, whoever it was and it is awfully hard to figure out the changes that are taking place but it is our Agency, it is our intelligence community that I head that has to report on these things to the President of the United States. You hear of covert action. Incidentally, covert action accounts for less than 2% of the CIA budget. Covert action is never entered into unless it is fully approved by the Operations Advisory Group, Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, head of the NSC, Director of Central Intelligence, two advisers present, the Attorney General, and the head of OMB, Office of Management and Budget, and a finding made by the President of the U.S. and then briefed to 7 committees

on the Hill and that is very different than what I think some of the concept here is about how covert action is used. I happen to believe that we need and the Congress found this, stopped well short denying the President, whoever he may be, of the need of having the covert action capability. I know that we need one. But when you think of that, when you think of James Bond image, you know that we have many hundreds, well in excess of a thousand Ph.D.'s and M.A.'s working at the Central Intelligence Agency, enough to staff a first class university. Producing intelligence and science, agriculture of the Soviet Union, OPEC price increases whatever it may be, economic intelligence, second to none in the Central Intelligence Agency. Our scientific and technical capability is unparalleled and then the last thing I would say and perhaps the most important, this Agency has been through an awful lot. As I said there was a handful of things over many administrations that went wrong. I'm not here saying they didn't. There was a barrellful of allegations that never were wrong where we were totally innocent but the main asset, as we live through these very difficult times, was not covert capability, not our science and technology, not our production of intelligence second to none but the dedication of the people who work in the CIA and I've been in business, I've been in politics proudly, I've been in non-partisan jobs such as Ambassador to the United Nations, and head of our office in China, and I have never been associated with people who have taken more heat with more style and with more dedication to their country than the people I work with now in CIA. Thank you very much.