

Bush, With an Eye to Senate, Discreetly Silent on CIA

By William Shawcross
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PEKING—For George Bush, one of the main requirements of his new assignment as head of the Central Intelligence Agency is discretion, and not just because the CIA's operations are supposed to be super-secret.

Shortly after he was informed of his nomination by President Ford, Bush pointed out that as an ex-congressman he knows that the Senate does not like to read about a nominee's intentions before he comes up for confirmation.

It was Sunday morning a week ago, as he was bicycling home from church, that Bush says he first heard of Mr. Ford's new plans for him. Asked if that means his bicycle is already wired for satellite reception, he replied, "It has a very long antenna."

There have been stories out of Washington that Kissinger informed Bush of what diplomats here call "Ford's coup" during his trip to Peking last month, but Bush insists that that is not true. "There was no mention whatsoever" Bush said in an

interview. "No change-over was discussed with me. Kissinger didn't mention it at all. I knew nothing" until the White House message.

Bush refuses to say what he discussed with Mr. Ford that Sunday afternoon, what undertakings he requested or was given before he agreed to accept. "No timeframe to the job was mentioned," he said.

Bush claims to have very strong feelings about the role of an intelligence agency in the making of foreign policy. "I believe in strong intelligence capability, both to provide advance information and to analyze existing information," he said. But he does not say just how strong or independent it should be. The relationship between covert operations and intelligence-gathering interests him, he says but it will interest the Senate more.

The Ford announcement aroused intense interest in Peking, where Bush serves as head of the U.S. liaison mission and last Monday the Soviet ambassador buttonholed a colleague and asked, "What's the meaning of our friend's promotion?" "I

don't know," was the reply, "but do you know where your government will send you next?"

Most speculation surround the reaction of the Chinese. Some officials here laughed when asked about it, other said it is an internal American affair. One junior official said spontaneously, "My goodness, that's terrible. That must mean he has been in the CIA all the time he was at the U.N. and in Peking." When this remark was relayed to Bush, he seemed fascinated. "That's the first Chinese comment I have heard," he said, "and that just shows you part of the problem . . . Do you mind if I report it to Washington?"

Bush and his wife had expected to remain in Peking almost another year, barring political offers. He said his time here has been "exceptionally pleasant and hopefully productive. In a job like this, it is a little egotistical to suggest any accomplishments have been mine. There has been nothing earth-shattering, but we have had some good contacts. I accept the Chinese judgment



GEORGE BUSH
... 'a long antenna'

that our relationship is in reasonably good shape. It has its twists and turns, but it's about the same as when I got here."

Diplomats in Peking argue that that is exactly the problem: The Chinese, they say, are irritated and dismayed by the apparent relative lack of interest Washington has shown them recently.

Bush refused to comment on the prospects for Mr. Ford's anticipated trip to China. The only substantial concern he will refer to now, even obliquely, is the intelligence agency's image. He worries about what his children's friends will think of his nomination, but he will not say what substantial changes he would make to improve the situation.