

Senate, in 64-27 Vote, Confirms Bush for CIA

By Spencer Rich

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The Senate confirmed George Bush as director of the beleaguered Central Intelligence Agency by a 64-to-27 vote yesterday, despite fierce Democratic criticism that appointment of the former Republican national chairman would taint the agency with partisanship in the public eye and further erode public confidence.

"We are not talking about an appointment to the post office," declared Sen. Frank Church (D-Idaho), chairman of the committee that has been investigating alleged CIA assassination plots, payments to foreign officials and abuses of power.

Nominated by President Ford after he dismissed William E. Colby in November, Bush was strongly defended by Armed Services Committee Chairman John C. Stennis (D-Miss.), senior

committee Republican Strom Thurmond (S.C.), Charles H. Percy (R-Ill.) and others.

Stennis said, "I support this nomination on the basis of the character and integrity and proven ability and judgment of this nominee" during his years in the House, ambassadorship to the United Nations and service as head of the U.S. mission in China.

Stennis said a Dec. 18 letter from President Ford, declaring that he "will not consider" Bush "as my vice presidential running mate in 1976," should quell charges that Bush might engage in political operations and cronyism as head of the agency.

Percy said Bush had served in all his posts "with honor, discretion and grace . . . George Bush has been more than a politician."

However, Church and others strongly objected to the nomination, saying the ap-

pointee should have "demonstrated qualities of independence."

"How peculiar it is," said Church, "that we are . . . being asked to confirm as CIA director an individual whose past record of political activism and partisan ties to the President contradict the very purpose of political impartiality and objectivity for which the agency was created." Such ties, Church said, would open Bush to White House pressure.

Sen. Thomas J. McIntyre (D-N.H.) said a CIA director must be a man unafraid to say "no" to the President. "The least desirable trait for a CIA director at this time . . . is that he be identified as one of the President's 'guys' with a disposition for 'team play.'"

McIntyre said the director of CIA, at a time when it is being reconstructed to eliminate abuses, must be identified as one insulated from "partisan political considerations."

Others critical of the appointment — including some who voted for him, such as Charles McC. Mathias Jr. (R-Md.), a member of the Church committee — said they hadn't any personal objection to Bush, but rather to his service in the highly partisan job of GOP national chairman.

"To place at the head of the CIA any person who has previously been at the head of a partisan political organization is singularly inappropriate," Mathias said. "It negates the concept that intelligence is something apart from ordinary political activity."

But he said he was voting for Bush because he wanted to avert a further "noisy and nasty political brawl" that would result if the President's nomination of Bush, however imprudent it may have been, were turned down by the Senate now.

In the final vote, Lowell P.

Weicker (R-Conn.) voted "present," saying he opposed the appointment of a former national chairman but refrained from voting "no" out of personal respect for Bush and his father, former Conn. Sen. Prescott Bush.

All Maryland and Virginia senators voted to confirm Bush. All six Democrats on the Church committee voted against the nomination, but four of the five Republicans voted in favor. The fifth, Richard S. Schweiker (Pa.), was absent.

Jesse Helms (N.C.) was the only Republican voting against Bush.