

Filling the CIA Breach

Washington

George Bush, a millionaire politician-diplomat, takes over as director of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) at the most difficult moment of its 19-year history.

Under investigation by Congress for spying — illegally — on U.S. citizens at home and plotting to assassinate or overthrow government leaders abroad, the CIA has been on the defensive throughout the year.

Two former directors — William Colby, whom Bush succeeds, and Richard Helms, now ambassador to Iran — have been the target of particular criticism, even by congressmen who generally support the U.S. intelligence community.

Political observers believe Bush will need all his breezy confidence and drive to improve not only the agency's image but also its efficiency and morale.

Revelations in Congress and expose-type books by former CIA agents have fractured the brittle, romantic world of espionage and

counter-intelligence.

Bush's first test will be when he goes before the Senate Armed Services Committee for confirmation hearing as the agency's 11th director.

Unlike his predecessor, Bush, 51, moves into the CIA's secluded estate in nearby Langley without direct experience in the intelligence field.

For the past 15 months he has been head of the U.S. liaison office in Peking — a top diplomatic post at a time when China and the United States moved to restore relations after 25 years of hostility.

His last major task in Peking presumably will be to arrange for the visit there at the end of the month by President Ford.

Bush, a Connecticut Yankee who became an oil millionaire in Texas, entered politics as a Republican congressman from his adopted state.

He served two terms in the House of Representatives and earned a record as a "gold star conservative" but with a voting

record on civil rights and campaign reform that was acceptable to some liberals.

He tried for the Senate in 1970, only to be beaten by Democrat Lloyd Bentsen.

But President Nixon, a long-time friend who had campaigned for him in 1966 and 1968, rewarded him with a prize diplomatic post as U.S. ambassador to the United Nations.

Bush made up for his inexperience as a diplomat with a mixture of enthusiasm, humor and hard work.

He held the post for 18 months before Mr. Nixon chose him for the politically more influential job as Republican national committee chairman.

As coordinator of a loose, independent coalition of state party committees, he had to cope with the disastrous impact of the Watergate scandals.

Bush was the son of the late Senator Prescott Bush, a Republican grandee and Wall Street banker.

Reuters



EX-AMBASSADOR GEORGE BUSH
Pictured at the United Nations in 1972