

CIA Agent Welch Buried

Ford, Kissinger Among Mourners at Arlington

By Laurence Stern
Washington Post Staff Writer

Richard S. Welch, who spent most of his life in the cold and anonymous world of international espionage, was buried in Arlington National Cemetery yesterday with a show of pomp usually reserved for the nation's most renowned military heroes.

President Ford and Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger stood as mourners while the flag-draped coffin of the slain Central Intelligence Agency official was carried by eight Marines to a horse-drawn caisson for the trip to the knoll where Welch was laid to rest.

The funeral was a rare and glittering tableau of the American national security establishment with several generations of diplomats and spies gathered on the grassy slopes of Arlington to pay tribute to Welch and the institution he served.

Although the Welch family requested that reporters be barred from the chapel where the funeral service was performed, provision was made for news coverage of what the Ford administration clearly conceived of as an important event.

The family was reported by friends to hold a grievance against some members of the press for contributing to a "climate of

opinion" that may have resulted in Welch's murder Dec. 23 in Athens. The CIA has maintained a large and controversial presence in Athens since the Greek civil war in the late 1940s.

Welch's murder came at a time when the public stock of the CIA was at the lowest point in its 27-year history. Two congressional committees, as well as the administration, are preparing new bureaucratic blueprints for reorganizing the agency to prevent future abuses of the sort that have resounded through congressional hearing rooms for months.

The ceremony was conducted with full military honors in freezing temperatures under a bright sun. President Ford and Kissinger arrived shortly before the beginning of the service at 11:30 a.m. Security personnel swarmed in unusual profusion through the crowd that gathered at the entrance to the chapel.

President Ford sat in the new, modernistic Ft. Myer chapel between CIA Director William E. Colby and Kissinger. George Bush, who has been nominated to succeed Colby, sat two rows behind. Brent Scowcroft, the President's special assistant for national

See FUNERAL, A2, Col. 1 *OVER*

FUNERAL, From A1

security affairs, sat in the row behind Mr. Ford.

Not once during the simple ceremony was Welch's name mentioned. There was a short eulogy, but no sermon. At one point, the officiating chaplain, Col. Duncan C. Stewart of Ft. Myer, asked that Welch's "devotion to duty and to country" be uppermost in remembrance of him.

At the end of the service, as the Army band played "Abide With Me," President Ford said a few words of condolence to Welch's widow, Maria Cristina, and then was introduced by Colby to the slain CIA officer's father, two sons and daughter.

It was at the President's insistence that Welch was buried in Arlington, which is now restricted to those who die while on active duty in the armed forces, veterans who held high government office or dependents of those buried in Arlington.

Welch, 46, had served in Europe and in Latin America and was reputed to be one of the CIA's most respected operatives.

Although he was in official biographical lists as being both a military and a diplomatic officer—common

covers for CIA operatives—he had served as an intelligence officer for more than 20 years.

He was a classic major at Harvard and would, according to one former colleague, spice his dispatches to Washington with references to Thucydides and quotations from Sophocles. He worked in Guatemala, Guyana, Cyprus and Peru—where the CIA has, from time to time, mounted intensive operations.

Among the groups under suspicion in Greece for the murder of Welch, according to one U.S. official, are Greek-Cypriot extremists in Athens. In Cyprus during the 1960s the CIA had close contacts with right-wing elements in Archbishop Makarios' government.

In the crowd of mourners that spread about the grassy burial ground were friends and colleagues from the CIA, State Department and other branches of government. It was probably the largest public gathering of American intelligence agents in Washington's history.

Among them were veteran operatives such as Thomas Karamessines, retired director of CIA clandestine services who managed U.S. intelligence activities in Greece during its civil war

and helped organize the CIA's counterpart organization in Athens.

Another was Mike Ackerman, who served under Welch in Guyana. Ackerman handed a reporter an index card bearing what he described as Plato's definition of the Republic's ideal guardian.

"The nature required to make a really noble guardian of our commonwealth," Ackerman's quotation said, "will be swift and strong, spirited and philosophic." Those, he said, were the qualities of Welch.

The mourners included at least two staff members of the Senate intelligence committee, whose members were

invited to attend the funeral by the administration.

One postscript to the funeral was the CIA's acknowledgement that it has asked the Justice Department to investigate whether federal laws were violated in publication of Welch's name by a Washington-based group called Fifth Estate.

Welch was named in two editions of the organization's magazine, Counter-Spy, as CIA station chief in Lima, Peru.

As has President Ford, David Phillips of the Association of Retired Intelligence Officers linked Welch's assassination to

publication of his name in Counter-Spy and an English-language newspaper in Athens.

Members of Fifth Estate have previously said that Welch's name first appeared in a Peruvian provincial newspaper that two Maryknoll missionaries brought to Washington. His name also appeared eight years ago in the book "Who's Who in the CIA," an unreliable compendium of names reported to have been gathered and published by Communist intelligence services.

Fifth Estate would not comment on the matter yesterday.