

CIA Nomination a 'Surprise' to Bush

Peking

George Bush, nominated as the new director of the Central Intelligence Agency, said here yesterday he faces "one hell of a challenge."

The 51-year-old Texan, chief of the U.S. liaison office here, told newsmen that President Ford's offer of the post came as a complete surprise.

He said it would be improper to discuss his new role in detail until the appointment has been ratified by the Senate but summed it up as "important, complicated and somewhat controversial."

"I believe we must have a strong CIA," he asserted.

Bush declined to discuss recent disclosures about illegal CIA operations.

"I was asked to do a tough job and believe I ought to do it," he told a small group of western correspondents in the lounge of his Peking residence.

"I believe in the importance of a sound, strong intelligence capability in this troubled world we live in. I am not unaware of the problems which have been swirling around the agency."

Bush said his new post would put him on an even footing with Secretary of State Henry Kissinger "in terms of access to the President."

"I have had close relations with President Ford and will have an access which I hope I will not abuse," he added.

He said he has no inside knowledge of intelligence work but has had "access to the product."

A former chairman of the Republican party's national committee, Bush has frequently been mentioned as a potential vice presidential nominee.

Reuters

Bush profiles filed Ford Ad, 4 Nov 75.