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Body of

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CIA Agent Flown Home

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Washington

Richard S. Welch, 46, the Central Intelligence Agency station chief whose slaying last week in Greece shocked the American intelligence community, came home yesterday in a flag-draped coffin.

The body of the CIA agent, accompanied by his son, Marine Second Lieutenant Patrick Welch, 23, arrived in a C-141 Air Force transport at Andrews Air Force Base.

Those who gathered in the chill dawn to pay tribute to the slain agent included CIA Director William E. Colby, Deputy CIA Director Vernon Walters and presidential counselor Philip W. Buchen Jr.

As the casket was carried from the plane by a Bolling Air Force Base honor guard, Welch's first wife, Patricia, and their 17-year-old daughter, Molly, placed their right hands over their hearts and the daughter burst into tears.

Welch was shot to death December 23 outside his suburban Athens home after he had been identified in an English-language Greek newspaper as a CIA agent.

He had previously served in U.S. embassies in Peru, Guatemala and Cyprus. An American magazine, Counter-spy, earlier had identified him as a CIA operative in Peru, where he served from 1972 until his transfer to Greece last May.

For the CIA, the airport ceremony represented rare public acknowledgement that one of its agents had been killed. The agency will hold a memorial service for Welch today at its headquarters in Langley, Va. The ceremony will be for agency employees only, including those in sensitive positions whose identities have to be protected.

No reporters or photographers will be admitted to the service.

President Ford has waived the military requirement to permit Welch's burial in Arlington National Cemetery.

A State Department spokesman said no funeral will be held until Welch's second wife, Kiki, now being treated in a Naples hospital, and his father, a retired Army colonel who is still in Greece, are able to return from Europe.

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