

Remarks at Groundbreaking Ceremonies for an Addition to the Central Intelligence Agency Headquarters Complex

May 24, 1984

When President Eisenhower came to this place a quarter of a century ago to dedicate the cornerstone of this building, he spoke of undecorated and unsung heroes. And when I was with you here 2 years ago, I mentioned those words and noted the heroes President Eisenhower spoke about were you, the men and women of the Central Intelligence Agency.

I return to the CIA today with exactly the same thought in mind. Without you, our nation's safety would be more vulnerable and our security fragile and endangered. The work you do each day is essential to the survival and to the spread of human freedom. You remain the eyes and ears of the free world. You are the "trip wire" over which the totalitarian rule must stumble in their quest for global domination.

Though it's sometimes forgotten here in Washington, the American people know full well the importance of vital and energetic intelligence operations. From Nathan Hale's first covert operation in the Revolutionary War to the breaking of the Japanese code at Midway in World War II, America's security and safety have relied directly on the courage and collective efforts of her intelligence personnel.

Today I want to stress to you again that the American people are thankful for your professionalism, for your dedication, and for the personal sacrifice each of you makes in carrying on your work. You're carrying a great and noble tradition. And I believe that you're adding a brilliant new chapter to the annals of American intelligence services.

In 3 1/2 years, significant changes have occurred at this Agency. New and vitally important missions are being performed that a few years ago many would have said were impractical or unachievable. Funding and personnel have grown substantially. The operations and analysis sections have seen increases in productivity and product. Morale has steadily improved. Recruiting is highly successful with the continuing growth in the number of talented, young Americans who want to work at CIA. Individual employees are gaining greater recognition for their work, and throughout this Agency, as well as in the Congress and our nation itself, there is a new recognition of the urgent importance of the mission of the CIA.

There are many quantitative measures of what you're achieving. You've increased the number of national intelligence estimates from 19 in 1980 to 55 in 1983, and in addition, completed 800 other special research projects. Though the specifics are classified, new stations have been opened abroad, and work with friendly intelligence and security services have been greatly expanded.

As most of you know, Bill Casey recently reported to me on all of this. And, frankly, it's a bit breathtaking. Something else equally dramatic has happened here recently. In two separate reports to you during the past 6 months, your Director has outlined an exciting new process of management reform and renewal. Your guidelines in this process are the techniques of modern management used at America's top companies, including many of the concepts outlined in the remarkable management and best seller, "In Pursuit of Excellence."

There has been a new emphasis on lean management staffs and, above all, establishing a consensus on the mission and the role of the agency. Underlying all this is a central insight: that, even more than

material rewards, a chance to create, to build, and to put into action the shared values of an institution is the strongest inducement to human excellence.

Memoranda and suggestions have been asked for from all of you, suggestions and memos that have been read by the Director personally. Now, all this has meant not only a stimulating period of discussion and analysis leading to many specific reforms, but also the adoption of a new Agency credo, written by you, the personnel of the Central Intelligence Agency. I've had a chance to read the credo of CIA. It's everything such a credo should be -- practical, yet idealistic; careful, but inspiring; specific, yet general enough to explain not only what it means to be a member of the CIA but what it means to be an American serving the cause of freedom in a dangerous and difficult world.

On this point, I want to stress: An intelligence agency cannot operate effectively unless its necessary secrets are maintained even in this, the most open and free country on Earth. We cannot expect you or your informants to endanger life and work because of carelessness, sensationalism, or unnecessary exposure to risk. Hostile intelligence activities conducted in this country and directed at U.S. interests abroad threaten not only our legitimate secrets and our technological advantages but also our privacy and, ultimately, our freedom. To the danger of espionage is added active measures designed to subvert and deceive, to disinform the public opinion upon which our democracies are built.

One of the greater dangers facing you is also the loss of necessary secrets through unauthorized and illegal disclosures of classified information. As I said in my memorandum last summer to all Federal employees, the unauthorized disclosure of our nation's classified information by those entrusted with its protection is improper, unethical, and plain wrong. I cite for emulation by the rest of the Government another phrase from the CIA credo: ``We subordinate our desire for public recognition to the need for confidentiality. We give unfailing loyalty to each other and to our common purpose."

Well, let me conclude by adding that the changes you have underway at CIA are a reflection of a larger renewal among the forces of freedom throughout the world. I think many of you realize that the days of defeatism and weakness are over for America and that in contrast to previous times the objectives of our foreign policy are being met.

Our economic recovery has strengthened the hand of the democracies, even as it has widened the economic and technological gap between ourselves and totalitarian nations. Our defense buildup has been a signal to the world that the American people remain ready to make the sacrifices necessary for the protection of human freedom.

Our alliances have been renewed and revitalized. Our support, both direct and indirect, for people whose countries are the victims of totalitarian aggression has blunted the Communist drive for power in the Third World.

The tide of the future is a freedom tide. American foreign policy has a new coherence and moral purpose. We have proposed the most extensive series of arms reduction proposals in history, and we have made it clear that we will negotiate without preconditions for as long as it takes.

We're now in a period of readjustment. Some of our adversaries who had grown used to disunity or weakness from the democracies are not enthusiastic about the success of our policies or the brightening trend in the fortunes of freedom. What is needed now is steadiness and calm and above all a quiet resolve to advance the cause of freedom as we continue to press our program for arms reductions and many other peace initiatives.

When historians look back at all of this, I'm sure they will conclude that no one has played a more important role in this exciting new era than all of you here at CIA. Your work, the work of your

Director, the other top officials have been an inspiration to your fellow Americans and to people everywhere.

I wanted to come here today not only to dedicate this new building, which will assist greatly in better coordinating and consolidating CIA activities, but to pledge to you my continued support and bring to each and every one of you the heartfelt thanks of the American people.

God bless you all.

Note: The President spoke at 11:34 a.m. at the site of the new addition near Langley, VA. He then joined other officials in breaking ground for the building.

<http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1984/52484b.htm>