

# LUISS



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SUPERVISOR

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# 1 Introduction

American intelligence is often portrayed in popular culture through movies and television series, featuring the extraordinary work of these brave spies. However, few people really know how the reality of American intelligence works. Therefore, let us begin by defining the concept of intelligence.

Intelligence, in this context, encompasses the collection of information, gathered inside and outside the United States, that applies potential dangers and risks to the nation, its people, its interests and undoubtedly its security. Specifically, the U.S. intelligence community is a federation of agencies and organizations in the executive branch, working separately or together to conduct and report to senior political leaders the information needed to protect the nation.

The history of U.S. intelligence is an intrinsic and complicated one which, contrary to the popular belief, has roots extending well before the Cold War era. Indeed, the origin of intelligence services can be traced back to the Revolutionary War. Over time, the intelligence apparatus expanded, which necessitated the development and strengthening of the intelligence structure. However, it was World War II, with the attack on Pearl Harbor, that underscored the insufficiency of the progress made during World War I and emphasized the imperative for coordination to prevent such disasters from occurring again. This need for coordination persists to this day, as it remains fundamental to furnish the President with accurate and unbiased information, providing a clear and transparent overview of the circumstances. Indeed, the impact of intelligence community information in U.S. policy has been and still is a key issue in the country's history. Notably, over the years, many of the crucial decisions undertaken by presidents have been based on information provided by the intelligence community itself. Among the various leaders who have shaped history George H.W. Bush plays an important role in this relationship between policy and intelligence. As the 41st president of the United States, he uniquely previously assumed the position of Director of Central Intelligence (DCI), affording him the opportunity to experience from both sides the importance of the information gathered by the intelligence community. Bush's presidency, spanning from 1989 to 1993, demonstrated the importance of this coordination between offices. This was especially evident, given the series of geopolitical events at the time, including the end of the Cold War and the Gulf War.

Therefore, this study aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the historical evolution of the intelligence community over the years. The journey begins with the Revolutionary War and navigates the annals of history, ending with the necessary reforms implemented in the aftermath of the 9/11 attack. Subsequently, I will explain the complex network of agencies and organizations that are part of the intelligence community, focusing particularly on the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and analyzing the pivotal role of the DCI, which is critical in comprehending the dynamics between the agency and the President.

Furthermore, I will analyze George H. W. Bush's influence on the intelligence community, examining in detail his position as DCI, his position as Vice President under Ronald Reagan's administration, and, significantly, his position as President of the United States. Within the second chapter, in particular, I will navigate into the issues and turbulence that characterized the CIA when Bush joined it. Indeed, the 1970s are known as the "turbulent period," as well as one of the worst periods of the agency, which witnessed the continuous scrutiny and criticism of the agency due to the publication of the "Family Jewels" report. During this analysis, I will, therefore, analyze Bush's difficulties during his time at the CIA, his strategic approach, the reforms he implemented, and his achievements as DCI.

Thus, the main objective of this work is to fully understand Bush's bearing on the agency, and consequently, to gain insights on the importance of coordination between the Intelligence Community and the Oval Office. The concluding chapter will precisely examine his eight years as Vice President and his presidency, with a focus on the state of the agency and the manifold challenges proposed in this crucial historical period.

In conclusion, this thesis is intended as an analysis of the dynamics of the intelligence community, examining Bush's work and influence both in his role as DCI and in his subsequent positions as Vice President and President. By addressing his challenges and triumphs, this study seeks to explain the pivotal role of individuals like George H. W. Bush in shaping the course of history through intelligence decisions and information.

## **2 Overview of American Intelligence**

### **2.1 History of the American Intelligence**

The origins of the American Intelligence community can be traced back to the Revolutionary War, when both the Continental Congress and the Continental Army engaged in intelligence gathering. In particular, the most remarkable intelligence effort during the Revolution came from the Continental Army, led by General George Washington. Indeed, Washington managed to demonstrate the importance of obtaining accurate and timely intelligence to avoid disastrous and unexpected events and understand enemy plans and movements.

In the aftermath of the Revolutionary War in 1783, there was minimal focus on developing an intelligence system or organization, particularly in the years preceding the Civil War when the United States did not perceive any major foreign threats. Primarily, the approach did not involve the establishment of a formal intelligence organization, but ad-hoc information-gathering missions and scouting parties in foreign-held territories of North America. Nevertheless, the Civil War witnessed the emergence of new techniques and organizations, foreshadowing the subsequent specialization and growth of intelligence in the 20th century. It became evident that a well-organized structure with espionage responsibilities was required in order to compete with other countries in the late 1800s as the acceptability of peacetime intelligence activities gained traction.

The impact of World War I further strengthened this necessity for a permanent and specialized intelligence apparatus. Particularly, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt deemed it imperative to institute an organization with the capacity to effectively gather, analyze, and assess economic and political information. In order to accomplish this objective, he sought the assistance of Colonel William J. Donovan. In the interwar period, key developments included the commitment of organizations as the Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI) and the Military Intelligence Division (MID) to domestic counterintelligence work and advancements in aerial technology. Throughout the conflict the American military espionage achieved notable accomplishments, including the anticipation of the “Offensive Ludendorff” in 1918 and the detailed information regarding the usage of the new cannon capable of hitting Paris. Another crucial development during this period was the transition of signals intelligence to peacetime operations. It is crucial

to emphasise that, up until that moment, the domain of espionage activities and information collection mainly retained its status as a military prerogative.

The Second World War had a profound and decisive influence on the structure and organization of the American security apparatus. The Office of the Coordinator of Information (Coi), headed by the New York lawyer, William Donovan, was established in July 1941 through the issuance of an executive order. Nevertheless, the pivotal turning point occurred in the aftermath of the Second World War, notably with an emphasis on the catastrophic events at Pearl Harbor. As a result, the imperative need for a consolidated command structure and a highly efficient intelligence apparatus within the United States was underscored, ultimately giving rise to the establishment of the contemporary American intelligence community. President Harry Truman and his advisers recognized that the devastating attack could have been mitigated if there had been better coordination and intelligence sharing among various commanders and departments. Thus, in June 1942, the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) was established through a presidential order, replacing the Office of the Coordinator of Information (COI). The OSS, placed under military command, retained a considerable degree of autonomy and expanded its scope of operations, including propaganda, psychological warfare, and paramilitary activities. This increased autonomy, however, inevitably resulted in conflicts with other military agencies involved in their respective civil intelligence activities. After Japan's surrender, President Truman dissolved the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), without any concrete plan for the establishment of a peacetime intelligence service capable of handling the challenges of the atomic era.

In order to cover this gap, President Truman created the Central Intelligence Group (CIG) in early 1946. Initially, the CIG comprised different components with diverse interests in foreign secrets, but it became evident that both strategic warning and clandestine activities required centralized coordination. While President Truman called for the unification of the armed services in mid-1946, intelligence reform took a secondary position during these discussions. It was not until May 1947 that Secretary of War Robert Patterson and Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal agreed that a defense reorganization bill should incorporate provisions for a Central Intelligence Agency. The decision was made to utilize the CIG as the foundation for this new intelligence agency, which continued to expand its missions and capabilities. The National Intelligence

Authority (NIA), comprising the Secretaries of State, War, and Navy, along with the President's chief military adviser, was given responsibility for overseeing the CIG. On July 8, 1946, the NIA issued Directive 5 (NIAD-5), providing the Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) with an implementation plan encompassing the broad powers envisioned by President Truman. NIAD-5 granted the CIG the authority to centralize research and analysis in areas of national security intelligence that required attention. Additionally, it directed the DCI to coordinate all foreign intelligence activities of the United States.

To establish the principles of unity of command and intelligence, the Congress passed the National Security Act in 1947, leading to the creation of key institutions such as the National Security Council, Secretary of Defense, Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). However, the Act also reflected the longstanding American skepticism towards centralized powers and large military establishments. Consequently, measures were incorporated to prevent the dominance of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, establish an independent Air Force separate from other military branches, and limit the law enforcement powers of the CIA. The Act had a crucial impact in shaping the U.S. intelligence capabilities. Indeed, it recognised the growing importance of intelligence during peacetime and the necessity to prevent other disasters such as Pearl Harbour.

The perceived persistent threat from the Soviet Union and its partners permitted for the significant extension of the peacetime insights and formed the collection and expository programs and the modern associations made to oversee them. Nevertheless, collecting data from closed social orders like URSS postured a genuine trouble, outstandingly in selecting and working spies inside the Soviet alliance regions. As a consequence, a more noteworthy dependence on specialized means of collection got to be fundamental with signals of intelligence demonstrating to be profitable. Technological developments in communication interferences, code-breaking, and electronic reconnaissance essentially improved the insights community's capacity to get basic bits of knowledge into the exercises of Soviet strengths and their partners. Furthermore, as the Soviet Union and its partners created their own intelligence capabilities, the United States centered on improving the counterintelligence endeavours to distinguish and neutralize outside spies working inside its borders.

## **2.2 Intelligence Reforms over time**

Throughout the history, the establishment and development of the American intelligence community have been shaped by a wide range of critical events. These events have been influenced by various dynamic factors, including the shift to other national security priorities, rapid technological developments, and the legacy obtained from intelligence failures.

In the aftermath of the Cold War, a fundamental question arose regarding the extent of intelligence required by the world's sole superpower. The geopolitical landscape underwent a significant transformation, accompanied by the emergence of new sources of threats. Consequently, a shift occurred in national priorities, with terrorism assuming a central role as the primary menace to the nation. Additionally, challenges associated with nuclear proliferation and cybercrime further accentuated the need for a re-evaluation of intelligence capabilities to effectively counter these threats. Despite the recognition of shifting priorities, the structure and organization of the intelligence community remained largely unchanged, failing to adapt to these evolving requirements. It was not until the fateful events of September 11, 2001, that a radical and decisive reform was enacted, highlighting the urgent imperative for transformative measures within the intelligence apparatus. Similar to the aftermath of the Pearl Harbor disaster, the intelligence failure to prevent the terrorist attack of 2001 played a pivotal role in compelling a re-evaluation of the intelligence community's structure. While certain reforms had been implemented to address the evolving technological landscape, characterized by rapid advancements in satellite imagery, signals intelligence, and computing power, it was the catastrophic events of September 11 that served as the definitive catalyst for political leaders to recognize the pressing need for substantial change. The magnitude and impact of those tragic events underscored the urgency of reassessing and adapting the intelligence apparatus to effectively counter emerging threats and safeguard national security.

Thus, the catastrophic events of September 11, 2001, served as a seminal turning point in both international and national politics, catching the world's sole superpower off guard. The deliberate acts of suicide carried out by the operatives of Al-Qaeda were not only profoundly tragic but also served as a catalyst for a long-overdue reform in the intelligence landscape. Despite the fact that the assaults on the Pentagon and the Twin Towers came as a surprise to the public, many government officials and specialists were



aware of the goals and capabilities of terrorist organizations such as al-Qaeda. 9-11 intelligence failure can be attributed to various factors, including psychological, bureaucratic, and political factors. Among the cognitive and psychological factors, it is evident that the failure of intelligence is not due to a lack of information but rather an excess of it. This excess of information can create a situation where valuable intelligence gets buried among contradictory or irrelevant data. Furthermore, an excessive reliance on their own capabilities has also hindered the proper recognition of the threat posed by al-Qaeda. Despite previous terrorist attacks, such as Bin Laden's fatwa in 1998 and the attacks on embassies and the USS Cole, there was a failure to significantly revise the approach to American security. This indicates a failure to learn from past incidents and adapt accordingly. Nevertheless, the intelligence failure of 9/11 can also be attributed, in part, to bureaucratic and organizational factors. A key issue was the fragmentation of the intelligence community at that time, with different agencies and institutions operating independently, leading to a lack of effective coordination. This fragmentation hindered interagency cooperation and significantly impeded the sharing of vital information. For instance, the CIA possessed knowledge that Khalid al-Mihdhar and Nawaf al-Hazmi, two of the 9/11 attackers, had participated in a significant meeting involving key figures within al-Qaeda. However, this critical information was not adequately transmitted to the FBI and the State Department. The primary cause behind this failure was the complex relationship characterized by suspicion and mistrust among the various agencies within the intelligence community, particularly between the CIA and the FBI. Moreover, it is imperative to acknowledge the significant role played by political factors in contributing to the monumental terrorist attack. Following the conclusion of the Cold War, policymakers failed to implement substantial reforms within the American intelligence community, thereby allowing existing weaknesses, evident well before 2001, to persist without correction. Exploiting this situation, Al-Qaeda capitalized on the combination of political, organizational, and psychological factors to orchestrate an attack on the world's preeminent superpower, resulting in the most notorious terrorist incident in recorded history.

Finally, as a direct consequence of these devastating terrorist attacks, policymakers came to recognize the imperative need for comprehensive reforms within the American intelligence community, aimed at rectifying existing vulnerabilities and

preventing the recurrence of such atrocities. Notably, the establishment of the Department of Homeland Security in 2003 emerged as a pivotal reform, serving to streamline and consolidate disparate agencies under a unified structure, thereby promoting improved coordination and cooperation among them. Furthermore, the release of the 9/11 Commission Report initiated a sequence of events that culminated in the enactment of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act (IRTPA-2004), which bolstered authorities and restructured organizational frameworks to enhance effectiveness and responsiveness<sup>1</sup>. This Act established the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) to be in charge of coordination and cooperation among the agencies.

### **2.3 Key Intelligence Agencies**

The American intelligence services form a highly intricate and multifaceted entity, encompassing various sectors and apparatuses that are coordinated by the United States Intelligence Community (U.S. IC), founded in 1981. This comprehensive network operates across diverse domains, focusing on national security, information gathering, monitoring threats to the nation, and advancing political and diplomatic objectives. The U.S. IC consists of 17 intelligence agencies, with the Office of Naval Intelligence being the oldest and the Space Delta 7 being the most recent addition. These agencies include Air Force Intelligence, Army Intelligence, Central Intelligence Agency, Coast Guard Intelligence, Defense Intelligence Agency, Department of Energy, Department of Homeland Security, Department of State, Department of the Treasury, Drug Enforcement Administration, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Marine Corps Intelligence, National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, National Reconnaissance Office, National Security Agency or Central Security Service, and Navy Intelligence.

Two of the seventeen agencies hold significant importance, not coincidentally being the most prominent among them. These agencies are the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the National Security Agency (NSA).

On the one side, the NSA is the primary cryptologic organization in the United States entrusted with the coordination, direction, and execution of highly specialized operations aimed at safeguarding the country's information systems and generating

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<sup>1</sup> Office of the Director of National Intelligence, "History", Official website of the Office of the Director of National Intelligence. Available at: <https://www.dni.gov/index.php/who-we-are/history>

foreign signals intelligence. As an integral component of the U.S. Department of Defense, the NSA fulfills its role as a combat support agency by delivering intelligence assistance to military operations through its comprehensive signals intelligence capabilities. The cybersecurity personnel, products, and services provided by the NSA are dedicated to ensuring the secure transmission and protection of military communications and data, thereby preventing unauthorized access by adversaries of the United States. Consequently, the NSA's primary mission revolves around furnishing policymakers and military forces with indispensable foreign signals intelligence (SIGINT). SIGINT assumes a pivotal role in national security, equipping U.S. leaders with vital information necessary for the defense of the nation, the preservation of lives, and the advancement of U.S. objectives and alliances on a global scale.

On the other side, the CIA, as a United States government agency, bears the responsibility of furnishing national security intelligence to senior U.S. policymakers, with the aim of facilitating effective and efficient decision-making pertaining to national security. Tasked with averting threats and advancing U.S. national security objectives, the agency is primarily responsible for gathering foreign intelligence, generating impartial analysis, and carrying out covert operations as directed by the President. While the CIA lacks law enforcement powers, it operates in close collaboration with the intelligence community, the Department of Defense, and various law enforcement agencies, addressing multifaceted issues such as counterintelligence and counterterrorism. Notably, the agency assumes a unique hybrid nature, officially classified as a civil entity while concurrently possessing significant operational involvement in military and paramilitary domains. Its independent status grants the CIA direct access to the White House, and it stands as the sole federal apparatus authorized by law to execute operations beyond national borders at the behest of the President. The CIA commands the largest portion of the intelligence budget and is distinguished by its coordination of human intelligence activities across the entire federal community.

The White House represents, unequivocally, the operational hub of the intelligence community system. The President holds the power of command and control, the authority to make appointments to leadership positions, and the operational oversight over the entire U.S. IC. At the helm of the community stands the Director of National Intelligence (DNI), who serves as the President's representative. Currently, this role is

held by the competent national security expert, Avril Haines. The close collaboration between the President and the intelligence community underscores the crucial importance of analysis and information derived from reliable sources. The fundamental role of the intelligence community is to provide the President, and thus the executive power, with a clear and comprehensive picture that enables informed and strategic decision-making for the nation's future.

## **2.4 The Role of DCI in the Intelligence Community**

The intelligence agencies within the United States are characterized by their fragmented nature, each having distinct organizational structures, lines of authority, and funding sources. However, the U.S. has made efforts to perceive these agencies as a cohesive "Community" rather than disparate entities with varied objectives. Indeed, historical evidence illustrates the profound implications that can arise from a deficiency in collaboration and coordination among intelligence agencies, as exemplified by pivotal events such as the Pearl Harbor attack and the 9/11 attacks.

The role and obligations of the Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) experienced a progressive development after President Harry Truman appointed Sidney Souers as the inaugural DCI in January 1946. Nevertheless, during that time, the DCI lacked essential components such as an established Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to oversee, an independent budget and personnel management authority, the ability to conduct foreign intelligence collection, and the power to facilitate consensus among the various intelligence agencies. The National Security Act of 1947 established the position of the Director of Central Intelligence (DCI), but it did not clearly delineate the DCI's responsibilities and the extent of their authority. Initially, the DCI could only offer recommendations to the National Security Council regarding the coordination of intelligence activities, lacking sufficient authority to effectively carry out this role. It was not until the CIA Act of 1949 that the DCI was granted financial and acquisition authority, which later proved to be crucial elements. Notably, significant changes enhancing the DCI's authority over other intelligence agencies were not implemented until the early 1970s. In 1971, President Nixon issued a directive to the Director of Central Intelligence (DCI), tasking them with setting intelligence collection requirements and priorities and

consolidating all "national" activities into a single budget. Subsequently, in 1992, significant amendments were made to the National Security Act of 1947 by the Congress. These amendments outlined three key roles for the DCI: firstly, serving as the head of the Intelligence Community; secondly, acting as the principal intelligence adviser to the President; and finally, assuming the position of the head of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Furthermore, these amendments granted the DCI the responsibility of establishing a centralized process to determine the priorities for the Intelligence Community. Additionally, they made the DCI accountable for formulating and presenting an annual budget for national foreign intelligence activities to both the President and Congress. The amendments also bestowed the authority upon the DCI to allocate personnel and funds within national intelligence programs and also mandated the DCI to coordinate the relationships of the Intelligence Community with foreign governments.

The Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) holds statutory authority and other powers and serves as the principal figure in charge of coordinating the diverse intelligence agencies within the United States. Supporting the DCI's efforts is the Intelligence Community Staff (IC Staff), which functions as a supportive organization responsible for assisting the DCI in managing the resources of the Intelligence Community. Moreover, the DCI assumes the role of chairing the National Foreign Intelligence Board (NFIB), which comprises the senior officials of all the agencies within the Intelligence Community. Notably, the NFIB aids the DCI in the examination and coordination of national intelligence policies, requirements, priorities, and plans. Among the various agencies within the Intelligence Community, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) possesses the broadest mandate. In addition to its diverse objectives and functions, the CIA also assists the DCI in fulfilling coordination functions, further strengthening their collaborative efforts.

Overall, the DCI invests a position of leadership which is of key importance in the Intelligence Community, granting cohesion, cooperation and efficiency of the intelligence activities both at the national and international level. Its role is fundamental to grant national security and for the protection of the United States interests. The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) has been led by a diverse group of individuals throughout its history, with 27 leaders directing the agency from 1941 to the present day. Notably, Major General William Donovan played a significant role in laying the foundation for the

establishment of the CIA. However, it was Sidney Souers who served as the first Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) from 1946 to 1947. Subsequently, a succession of leaders followed, including Hoyt S. Vandenburg, Roscoe H. Hillenkoetter, Walter Bedell Smith, Allen W. Dulles, and John A. McCone. During the 1960s, William F. Raborn Jr., Richard M. Helms, and James R. Schlesinger assumed the role. In the 1970s, William E. Colby, George H.W. Bush (who served from 1976 to 1977), and Stansfield Turner took the helm. The 1980s saw the leadership of William J. Casey, William H. Webster, Robert M. Gates, and R. James Woolsey. John M. Deutch and George J. Tenet led the CIA in the 1990s, followed by Porter J. Goss and Michael V. Hayden in the 2000s. In the 2010s, Leon E. Panetta, David H. Petraeus, and John O. Brennan held the position. Michael R. Pompeo and Gina Haspel served as DCI in the 2020s, and in 2021, William J. Burns assumed the role<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Central Intelligence Agency (2023), "Profiles in Leadership: Directors of the Central Intelligence Agency and its Predecessors 1941-2023", CIA.gov. Available at: <https://www.cia.gov/static/4789eee9e734cd7409eed3d133929b36/Profiles-in-Leadership-Updated-July-2023.pdf>

## **3 George H.W. Bush as DCI**

### **3.1 Background on George H.W. Bush's Appointment as DCI**

George Herbert Walker Bush, as the 41st President of the United States is notable for being the only President to have previously held the position of Director of Central Intelligence (DCI). He comes from a family with a long history of involvement in politics and public service, beginning his academic career at Yale University before enlisting in the military at the age of 18. Due to his brilliant abilities, he rapidly earned his wings and went on to become the youngest Navy pilot. He was given a position with the USS San Jacinto-based Torpedo Squadron (VT-51). During World War II, he fearlessly engaged in 58 combat missions, demonstrating exceptional valour and earning, for his courageous actions, the Distinguished Flying Cross. Despite facing adversity when he was shot down by Japanese anti-aircraft fire during a mission over the Pacific, his resilience and determination prevailed. Following his military service, he returned to Yale University and diligently pursued his studies while also excelling in sports. In January 1945, he married Barbara Pierce, and together they raised six children: George, who would later assume the presidency as the 43rd President of the United States, Robin, John, Neil, Marvin, and Dorothy. Emulating the path and passion of his father, Prescott Bush, who was elected Senator from Connecticut in 1952, also George fostered a deep interest in public service and politics. Bush commenced his political career by serving two terms as a Representative to Congress from Texas. Despite encountering two unsuccessful attempts at securing a Senate seat, his unwavering dedication and proficiency propelled him to a series of prestigious appointments. Notably, he assumed the role of United States Ambassador to the United Nations, Chief of the U.S. Liaison Office in the People's Republic of China, and, of significant relevance, the position of Director of the Central Intelligence Agency. In 1974 Gerald Ford assumed the presidency and he contemplated the possibility of nominating George H.W. Bush as Vice President. However, Ford ultimately selected Nelson Rockefeller, the Governor of New York, for the position. While serving as the Ambassador to Beijing, on November 1, 1975, Bush surprisingly received a telegram from Henry Kissinger, the Secretary of State under President Ford, requesting his acceptance of the role of Director of Central Intelligence (DCI). Bush's friends and colleagues advised him that this appointment could mark the end of his

political career, nevertheless Bush accepted the position. Those expectations proved to be wrong since his tenure as DCI represented a stepping stone in his political trajectory. Indeed, following his role as the 11th DCI, Bush went on to become Vice President under President Ronald Reagan in 1981 and later succeeded becoming the 41st President of the United States. In particular his ascendants to the presidency demonstrated the fallacy of the initial belief that accepting the position of DCI would hinder Bush's political ambitions, as he continued to pursue his career in politics with great fervour and dedication.

Following the Watergate scandal, a pervasive atmosphere of mistrust towards the political establishment emerged in the United States. This prevailing sentiment of mistrust naturally gave rise to a demand for a responsible and transparent government. Consequently, a series of reforms and amendments were implemented in the Congress to enhance ethics, accountability, and integrity in public service. Against this backdrop, in December 1975, Senate committee hearings were convened to assess the suitability of George H.W. Bush for the position of Director of Central Intelligence (DCI). However, Bush's candidacy faced formidable challenges as the predominantly Democratic Congress harbored lingering resentments towards his perceived role as an apologist for former President Nixon. The 1970s marked a tumultuous phase known as the "time of troubles," witnessing six different Directors of Central Intelligence serving within a mere ten-year span. During this period, the agency faced significant controversy following the disclosure of the "Family Jewels," a report revealing contentious activities carried out by the agency dating back to the administration of President Dwight Eisenhower. Consequently, George H.W. Bush assumed his position at a critical juncture when the CIA was grappling with an existential crisis, characterized by low morale. In late November, the Church Committee, named after its president Frank Church, released reports unveiling the CIA's involvement in attempted assassinations of foreign leaders. These reports provided specific information regarding the assassination plots against Fidel Castro and Patrice Lumumba. While subsequent revelations on December 4 implicated the agency in the overthrow of the Allende government in Chile. Additionally, the Pike Committee pressed the Ford administration to clarify the CIA's covert engagement in the civil war in Angola, leading to the Senate's decision to terminate funding for American-backed rebels in the region. Given the tumultuous and challenging



years experienced by the CIA, there arose a pressing need for a resolute and fervent leader capable of revitalizing morale, stemming the adverse consequences, and, of utmost importance, rehabilitating the agency's tarnished reputation. Despite this challenging environment, Bush possessed unwavering confidence and a vision to steer the agency towards restoration, both in terms of morale and reputation. The challenge at hand was to ascertain how an outsider, such as George H. W. Bush, without any background in spycraft could successfully manage the world's largest intelligence service during a time of critical existential crisis. In order to secure his appointment, George H.W. Bush encountered numerous obstacles within the Senate. Of particular significance was the opposition led by Church, being the prominent voice and representing the congressional endeavors to investigate and reform the intelligence community. Church vehemently opposed Bush's nomination, viewing it as a strategic maneuver by President Ford to place a politically biased figurehead within the CIA, thereby enabling the White House to exert control at a time when Congress was actively striving to curtail misconduct and abuses within the public service and intelligence agency. The confirmation of Bush's appointment as DCI remained in a state of uncertainty for several days until the assassination of Richard Welch, the CIA's station chief in Greece. The CIA and the Ford administration saw this tragic event as an opportunity to undermine the credibility of Church and his committee's investigations. William Colby, Bush's predecessor as DCI, publicly criticized Congress and attributed Welch's killing to the sensationalism surrounding the CIA's investigations. Despite the lack of concrete evidence, these efforts to discredit Church and his committee had a significant impact on the political climate. Consequently, Bush's confirmation received greater support, ultimately resulting in a vote of 64-27 in his favour.

### **3.2 Overview of his tenure**

George H.W. Bush assumed the role of Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) on January 30, 1976, recognizing the need for strong leadership to restore the agency's low morale at the time. However, the true challenge George H.W. Bush encountered as DCI did not stem from foreign adversaries but rather from the Congress, the White House, and the press, which held a highly critical perception of the intelligence agency during that

period. Indeed, the publication of the "Family Jewels" report had caused reputational damage that demanded an authoritative figure to guide the agency back on the right path, since from that moment the CIA was considered the nation's enemy. Bush firmly believed in the CIA's significance as a powerful instrument in ensuring U.S. defense. In a speech delivered in San Antonio in 1978, he expressed his conviction, stating, *"I think we should think of the CIA as a national asset that must be preserved as a vital part of our defense system (...) It is important that the American people understand the intricate job the CIA is doing in an increasingly complex world. It is essential we have the support of the American People."* Despite his limited experience within the agency and a relatively short tenure, George H.W. Bush's contributions were fundamental in boosting internal morale and restoring the public image of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Thanks to the previous positions he assumed as Texas congressman, national chairman of the Republican National Committee, Ambassador to the United Nations, and Special Envoy to China, Bush managed to establish a reputation as a strong leader. His experiences as Special Envoy in China revealed his frustration with the concentration of power held by Secretary of State Kissinger. Consequently, Bush insisted on personally briefing President Ford about intelligence discoveries, making him the first president to receive daily briefings directly from an Agency officer. This approach highlighted Bush's commitment to transparency and direct communication with the highest levels of government. However, the tensions between Henry Kissinger and George H.W. Bush persisted, particularly concerning intelligence assessments regarding Soviet capabilities and threats. In February 1976, President Gerald Ford issued two executive orders that would have been accepted and enforced by George H.W. Bush in his role as DCI. In the first order (Executive Order 11905) restrictions on domestic surveillance activities carried out by the CIA were imposed, while the second order (Executive Order 11906) established the Intelligence Oversight Board (IOB), a new organ with the duty investigate potential unlawful activities within the Intelligence Community<sup>3</sup>. Additionally, President Ford conducted a press conference to formally announce the creation of the National Security Council (NSC), the IOB, and the Committee on Foreign Intelligence, with Bush assuming the chairmanship, with the responsibility of overseeing the entire Intelligence

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<sup>3</sup> Central Intelligence Agency (2016), "Bush as Director of Central Intelligence". Available at: <https://www.cia.gov/stories/story/bush-as-director-of-central-intelligence/>

Community. Acknowledging Bush's valuable contributions and diligent efforts, President Ford took the decision to include him in various high-level meetings, including an emergency NSC gathering held subsequent to the tragic assassination of US Ambassador Francis Meloy in Beirut on June 16, 1976. In this critical event, Bush's provision of well-crafted evacuation routes for Americans in Lebanon by both land and sea left a lasting impression on President Ford, thereby bolstering and enhancing the public perception of the CIA. In June 1976, Governor Jimmy Carter adopted the practice of being briefed on intelligence matters even prior to his official nomination as President. This led Carter to make an unprecedented request to President Gerald Ford, seeking classified CIA briefings on intelligence issues, in order to put them on a more equal footing during presidential debates about discussions on foreign affairs. President Ford granted Carter's request, assigning the responsibility to George H.W. Bush. On July 5th, Bush had his initial meeting with Carter in Pennsylvania, followed by subsequent meetings in Plains, Georgia. Carter was pleasantly surprised by the briefings and even contemplated retaining Bush as DCI in the event of his own election. Bush, harbouring a genuine desire to continue his role as DCI and complete his ongoing efforts, initiated a discussion with the president-elect regarding his position in November 1976. Bush offered his resignation, while also making it clear the possibility of being persuaded to maintain his position as DCI. Carter remained notably reticent and eventually, in January 1977, accepted Bush's resignation. Though not readily apparent at the time this decision proved to be a transformative turning point in Bush's career. Without his resignation as DCI, George H. W. Bush would not have engaged in the electoral race against Reagan in the 1980 presidential election, subsequently missing the opportunity to serve as Vice President and ultimately ascend to the presidency of the United States.

### **3.3 Intelligence Community Reforms and Challenges in Bush's Tenure**

As elucidated previously, Bush assumed his position at the CIA during a period marked by a profound public distrust towards intelligence agencies and a severe decline in morale within the organization. He had to face the task of recognizing and correcting the deficiencies of the agency, notably with the main aim to rehabilitate its reputation in the eyes of the public. Thus, the prevailing sentiment called for a strong leader as DCI,

who could be capable of restoring public confidence and implementing necessary reforms in intelligence-gathering practices and accuracy. George H.W. Bush was widely regarded as the individual with the capability to address these challenges effectively. Indeed, his appointment as DCI introduced a sense of hope and confidence within the organization and among the public.

In 1976, President Ford received a letter from Bush containing a set of 12 recommendations, of which 4 pertain directly to the role of the Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) within the intelligence community. During President Ford's administration, notable transformations occurred in the functions of the DCI, particularly as the head of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the IC Staff. Among these recommendations, the foremost proposition entailed the establishment of an additional deputy for the DCI responsible for orchestrating community-wide efforts and subsequently, he asked to reinvigorate endeavours concerning resource allocation. Then, in alignment with the perspective articulated by Colby, another recommendation advocated for a reorientation of the DCI's primary focus away from tactical intelligence matters. Furthermore, Bush proposed that the IC Staff be situated in a distinct location, separate from the CIA Headquarters. The main aim of President Ford and Bush as his DCI was to strengthen the capabilities and functions of the agency while at the same time safeguarding it from future power abuses. In order to produce this objective the New Executive Order 11905 was issued by the White House. In light of this order, the significance of the role of the Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) has markedly escalated. This elevation in responsibility is particularly evident in the DCI's function as the official spokesperson in Congress, a role increasingly essential and simultaneously contentious, stemming from the Congress's heightened scrutiny in the aftermath of the numerous scandals during those years. The legislative body has indeed intensified its demands for precise and comprehensive insights into the agency's operations, necessitated by the aim of upholding transparency and integrity within the agency itself. In addition to delineating the various obligations and functions of the Director of Central Intelligence (DCI), the order also revoked the existence of the United States Intelligence Board (USIB), which had been established by President Eisenhower in 1958. In its stead, the DCI assumed the authority to establish advisory boards tailored to the exigencies of the intelligence community's concerns. In this regard, Bush decided to establish the

National Foreign Intelligence Board tasked to address matters of substance and enhance coordination, thus substituting the USIB. Furthermore, through the executive order, the establishment of the Intelligence Oversight Board (IOB) was formalized, thereby creating a body vested with the authority to oversee potential transgressions within the restructured Intelligence Community. Bush demonstrated both eagerness and proactive intent in promptly executing the President's issued executive order. He pursued a deliberate and incremental course of action, aimed at mitigating potential adverse responses. In pursuit of this objective, he embraced an all-encompassing strategy, portraying himself as an authoritative figure who, concurrently, displayed inclusivity and a willingness to accommodate the majority of the staff members. Through his participatory and collective approach, Bush effectively revitalized the waning morale within the agency, conveying to the staff a sense of stewardship over a vital institution, despite the tumultuous period the agency endured during those years. This approach extended to the formulation of the executive order for the formalization of the Intelligence Oversight Board (IOB). The IOB was endowed with a watchdog role, stipulating that inspectors general and general counsels were tasked with exposing instances of unlawful or improper behaviour. Assuming the role of a guide for the intelligence community, Bush made the strategic decision to appoint Vice Admiral Murphy as the Deputy to the Director of Central Intelligence for the Intelligence Community, which entailed his elevation to four-star rank, surpassing that of the heads of the National Security Agency (NSA) and the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA). The CIA officers were unsure of the great emphasis put by Bush on the role of the DCI, and although Knoche's appointment as DDCI substituting Lt. Gen. Vernon Walters, they feared that Bush didn't share their perception of the CIA as a unique institution that should be tied closely to the DCI.

A pivotal aim that Bush diligently pursued throughout his tenure was the enhancement of the Intelligence Community's (IC) workforce, marked by a strategic repositioning to disentangle it from the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), thereby relocating it to a central locus. This strategic shift, however, signalled the cessation of the CIA's previous dominion over aspects of the IC staff, which had hitherto been perceived as inherently aligned with its purview. Simultaneously, this choice garnered Congressional affirmation, as it provided an assurance of the DCI's genuine commitment to fulfilling his responsibilities. In the course of his tenure, Bush also directed his efforts

toward augmenting financial resources and positions. Notably, in July 1976, he corresponded with the Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), advocating for the establishment of a novel structure encompassing 196 positions, inclusive of 18 newly proposed super-grade positions. This structure was useful in order to avoid depending on the organizations of the community members for positions, remuneration and so on. Furthermore, Bush decided to personally manage the selection of senior officers. He chose members of great regard within the agency. In particular he decided to appoint John McMahon as Adm. Murphy's deputy, Fritz Ermarth, who was an analyst for the soviet affairs, was assigned to the IC staff to better the evaluation, finally Richard Kerr was instead assigned to be the executive official of the IC staff. This structural framework proved to be useful in mitigating reliance on constituent organizations within the intelligence community for matters involving personnel placement, compensation, and related considerations. Additionally, Bush opted to exercise direct oversight over the selection of senior officers, a responsibility he assumed personally. This discerning approach involved the deliberate selection of individuals held in high esteem within the agency. Specifically, his evaluation led to the designation of John McMahon as Deputy to Vice Admiral Murphy. Furthermore, Fritz Ermarth, renowned for his expertise in Soviet affairs analysis, was appointed to the IC staff, enhancing the quality of evaluations conducted. Notably, Bush decided to assign the role of Executive Official of the IC staff to Richard Kerr, encompassing significant responsibilities within this context.

Bush's leadership, characterized by a positive and comprehensive approach, cultivated a climate within the agency that was devoid of regrets and discord, despite his replacement of several top officers at the CIA. Although Bush's tenure as DCI spanned only a year, he encountered a significant array of challenges and obstacles. Among these challenges, George Bush encountered the formidable task of establishing the newly formed Central Foreign Intelligence (CFI), which necessitated the delineation of its role and responsibilities. The first important thing he had to deal with was the intricate task of configuring the composition National Foreign Intelligence Program (NFIP). Bush guided a debate of which programs should constitute a part of it and accommodated all the diverse viewpoints and perspectives. Notably, the contention arising from the FBI, which demanded for the exclusion of its activities of foreign intelligence collection from the

NFIP budget. Bush considered the CFI right beneath the President and the National Security Council (NSC). He conceived the CFI as an important forum for intelligence problems at the political level, in particular for questions regarding the Department of Defense and the Office of the DCI. Bush's ability to find agreements and keep an harmonious climate is highlighted in the collaboration with Robert Ellsworth, charged with the intelligence question of the DOD. Mitigating concerns that the CFI's activities might impinge upon the operational dynamics of the DOD, Bush deftly negotiated a pact of non-interference that ensured the alignment of efforts between the CFI and the DOD. In this landscape he managed to demonstrate his ability in dealing with high-ranking functionaries within the Pentagon, all the while granting that all the multifaceted opinions and requests in the intelligence community were heard. Another prominent challenge was the leadership dilemma pertaining to the management of the "Team B" strategy. Certain members of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board (PFIAB) were of the belief that the National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) was downplaying the threats emanating from Soviet programs and military capabilities. Dissatisfied with this, they reiterated their request to Bush in 1976, even after having applied pressure on Colby in 1975. Responding to this request, Bush acquiesced and granted external experts access to classified data. Subsequently, three parallel analytical efforts were formalized: one designated as "Team A," comprising government intelligence analysts who had contributed to the NIE; another as "Team B," featuring non-governmental expert groups. However, the outcomes of Team B, which portrayed society as being exceptionally perilous and menacing, were eventually leaked. Bush, who had hitherto strived to shield the agency from scandals and criticisms, reacted with a sense of indignation. Nonetheless, the Team A/B approach proved to be an invaluable methodology for identifying biases, assumptions, and alternative perspectives regarding the same issue. Indeed, this enduring efficacy has led to its continued utilization in contemporary times<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> Central Intelligence Agency (2023), "Profiles in Leadership: Directors of the Central Intelligence Agency and its Predecessors 1941-2023", CIA.gov. Available at: <https://www.cia.gov/static/4789eee9e734cd7409eed3d133929b36/Profiles-in-Leadership-Updated-July-2023.pdf>

### 3.4 Intelligence Community Achievements in Bush's Tenure

Despite his nature as a relative "outsider" to the agency, George Bush demonstrated a remarkable and well-suited aptitude for his role as Director of Central Intelligence (DCI). This proficiency is particularly evident through his skillful navigation of the multifaceted challenges and complexities that emerged during his tenure. Despite a relatively short mandate and an initial congressional skepticism towards his appointment, Bush assumed leadership in a period of profound crisis within the agency. Nonetheless, he effectively addressed the demands of his position. In his significant discourse "I want this Job" he articulated his commitment and resolute determination to assume this position<sup>5</sup>.

He expresses *"Restoration of the public's confidence is essential if we are to get on about our important work here. But the emphasis now will be on the future. And because of its dedicated people, this agency is the finest intelligence agency in the world. They will have my total support. And I'll work hard at that. We are not in the policy business we'll call 'em as we see 'em. We will be objective in our estimates. I am determined to protect those things that must be kept secret. And I am more determined to protect those unselfish and patriotic people who with total dedication served their country, often putting their lives on the line only to have some people bent on destroying this agency expose their names. This must stop and I'll do my level best to play a role in that. I want this job. I want to do it well, and I'm proud to be a part of the CIA."*<sup>6</sup>

Indeed, foremost among his accomplishments was his perfect management of not only revitalizing morale within the agency but also restoring its public image, despite entering during a period of notable public skepticism. Thanks to the inclusive and collaborative approach that Bush assumed as DCI, the establishment of a harmonious and inclusive working environment where all voices could be heard was created. This permitted him to not only manage the agency's internal dynamics and morale but also to present a united front to the public. As his term was near to a close, George Bush communicated with President Ford by means of a letter, expressing his profound contentment with the outcomes and advancements that had been accomplished through

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<sup>5</sup> Central Intelligence Agency (2016), "Bush as Director of Central Intelligence". Available at: <https://www.cia.gov/stories/story/bush-as-director-of-central-intelligence/>

<sup>6</sup> Central Intelligence Agency (2018), "I Want This Job- George H. W. Bush and the CIA"



the diligent application of the executive order throughout the course of his tenure. Over the course of this year of service, he instituted the National Foreign Intelligence Board (NFIB), managed a comprehensive reorganization of the IC staff to enhance its autonomy from the CIA, and diligently crafted legislative proposals pertaining to the appointment of a community deputy. Despite his initial reservations, what he considered to be a possible end mark to his political career swiftly evolved into a labour of love that ultimately imbued him with a profound sense of accomplishment and for which he was grateful for. Notably, he obtained a profound sense of pride from the significant milestones that were realized under his guidance.

First and foremost, Bush skilfully reinforced control mechanisms, executing substantial changes, particularly within the Department of Defense (DOD). This initiative produced heightened efficiency and improved coordination throughout the department. Throughout his tenure, he aimed at enhancing the quality and accuracy of intelligence produced by the Intelligence Community (IC). This approach led to a more comprehensive understanding of potential threats and challenges impeding the agency's operational effectiveness. In particular, in pursuit of unbiased insights into potential agency vulnerabilities, he introduced the "Team B" approach. Despite the leak of information, this strategy proved valuable for identifying conceivable risks and hazards to the US agency, thereby enabling more thorough and insightful analyses. This "Team A/Team B" technique indeed is continued to be used in contemporary times to find possible biases or alternative views about issues. Moreover, Bush introduced a new budget development method through the Central Foreign Intelligence (CFI), introducing innovative strategies for the allocation of financial resources within the IC domain. He, then, endeavoured to boost the autonomy and independence of the IC staff by dislocating the office from the CIA's headquarters, aiming to enhance professionalism for more refined intelligence analysis and production.

## 4 From Langley to the White House

### 4.1 Impact of George H.W. Bush's Tenure as DCI

George H. W. Bush's tenure as Director of Central Intelligence was relatively short, but marked by a series of meaningful reforms and accomplishments. First and foremost, he entered the CIA in a turbulent period and provided the agency a period of calm, enabling it to restore morale and legitimacy in the public's eyes. His encompassive and positive approach helped to make everyone in the agency feel heard, while at the same time rapidly implementing President Ford's executive order 11905. Bush managed to do it in an excellent way, avoiding creating any negative responses or disagreements and pushing for boosting integrity and transparency. Indeed, entering the CIA after the Watergate scandal and the other revelations about the agency's illegal activities, Bush's main objective exactly reflected this necessity to restore credibility. In this period marked by the public mistrust, Bush wanted to demonstrate that Cia was "*the finest intelligence agency in the world*"<sup>7</sup> and to do this he decided to focus on enhancing professionalism, accuracy of information and transparency. Notably, the impact of the changes that he made during his one-year tenure concentrated on the role of the DCI. The image of the DCI was indeed boosted and finally started to be considered as the community's leader, due to the dealings with the president and at the cabinet level. Through the application of the executive order, he also enhanced information-sharing and coordination among the intelligence agencies, making, for instance, the IC staff less dependent on the CIA. His struggle in ensuring that reliable and unbiased information was transmitted to the high-ranking officials and policy makers continued to shape the quality of the work at the CIA. For instance, Team A/Team B technique, used under Bush's tenure to obtain unbiased information, is still used nowadays within the agency. Furthermore, his strong leadership mixed with his group-oriented approach strongly influenced other DCI leaders who tried to follow his path, based on the pursuit of ethics and integrity.

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<sup>7</sup> Central Intelligence Agency (2018), "I Want This Job- George H. W. Bush and the CIA"

## 4.2 1980 Presidential Campaign

Following his resignation from his role as Director of Central Intelligence, Bush had to figure out what to do next. He decided to embrace a journey into the reality of the presidential race, entering this endeavour in 1979. During the 1980s presidential campaign, Ronald Reagan emerged as the main contender for the presidency, managing to become the favoured candidate. Reagan, who was originally aligned with the Democratic Party, realigned his political direction and turned to the Republican Party. Notably, he was elected as Governor of California in 1966. Previous to the 1980s campaign, Reagan's endeavours included unsuccessful bids for the Republican presidential nomination in 1968 and 1976. As the presidential campaign unfolded, Bush demonstrated to be a formidable adversary to Reagan. Notably, this distinction arose from his ability to gain the support of the moderate Republicans who expressed concerns about Reagan's strict conservatism. Despite always declaring his shortcomings as an orator, Bush succeeded in projecting a reliable reputation, strictly avoiding to be presented as arrogant or self-centred. Learning from President Carter's experience, he foremost recognised the pivotal significance of the earliest primary contests. Indeed, in accordance with this strategy, he appeared in Iowa far more frequently than his fellow contenders. Consequently, Bush succeeded in winning victories in both the Iowa caucuses and New Hampshire. Reagan's ambush, though, rapidly became clear. Nevertheless, Bush continued to show a persistent determination, sustaining a contest between the two. The tensions between them were high, with Bush criticizing his opponent's economic approach as "voodoo economics" and emphasizing on the fact that his age was ideal for assuming the presidential role. At the time, indeed, Bush's age was precisely fifty-six, opposed to Reagan's nearing septuagenarian status. Two days before the electoral balloting, a debate was scheduled, with the exclusive inclusion of the two front runners. Thus, the participation of the other candidates on the list were precluded. Reagan, however, strongly believed in an equitable inclusion of all contenders and offered to personally finance for their participation. Consequently, Reagan managed to grant Anderson, Baker, Crane and Dole the opportunity to take part. The presidential race culminated with a 50% of votes in Reagan's favour. Bush obtained the second position, while Bob Dole opted to drop out of the race.

The only uncertainty left after the debate surrounded the identity of Reagan's choice as his vice. Initially, Gerald R. Ford was considered, but opting for a former president as the vice-president would have sparked considerable controversy. Following that, Reagan turned to Bush as his choice. Bush absolutely did not expect to be chosen. This selection left him mainly worried with the challenge of backing up a program that he had personally opposed during the campaign. Notably, Reagan's programme included provisions for a constitutional amendment to prohibit abortion and omitted endorsement of the Equal Rights Amendment. In private, Bush expressed the issue to Reagan affirming that, despite being morally against abortion, a prohibition on it could not be the right strategy. Furthermore, controversies about Reagan's program centred on fiscal and foreign matters. Indeed, in August 1980s he personally visited China and Japan, providing reassurances that, despite Reagan's pro-Taiwan inclinations, the US policy of recognising China as one would remain unviolated.

On the other hand, the democratic nomination process saw the opposition between the former President Carter and Sen. Ted Kennedy. In late 1979 Senator of Massachusetts Kennedy, the last surviving brother of President John F. Kennedy, officially joined the presidential race. However, due to his role in a car incident that caused the death of a woman passenger, doubts surrounding his integrity arose, making many voters uncertain of his candidacy. Carter's prospects, on the other hand, were boosted during the presidential campaign thanks to the Iran hostage crisis. Exactly one year before the general elections, followers of the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini assaulted the U.S. embassy in Tehrān, taking dozens of Americans hostage. Throughout the year of the general election, while some were released, more than 50 hostages remained captive. This created a situation of international crisis, where the public leaned heavily on the president seeking for his support and help. Despite Kennedy's victories in some key states, Carter, together with Vice Pres. Walter Mondale, managed to be renominated in a contentious convention in New York.

During the 1980s, the United States faced significant issues, namely inflation, increasing unemployment, the crisis in Iran, and of pivotal importance the Cold War against the Soviet Union. Notably, the former president Jimmy Carter opted for a strategy of painting his opponent as an extremist, while Ronald Reagan primarily sought to demonstrate his devotion to addressing the Americans' prevailing challenges of that era.

Indeed, Reagan's agenda was centred on boosting the economy, through initiatives such as expanding deregulation, a federal hiring freeze, a reduction of the wasteful spending in the government, and corporate tax cuts. Nevertheless, Reagan extended his program's focus beyond domestic matters, seeking to contrast Carter in the area of foreign policy. He, indeed, emphasized on standing up against the Soviet and advocated in favour of expanding military spending. Furthermore, Carter's position was weakened with the unsuccessful attempt to rescue the hostages in Tehran, which resulted in the deaths of eight American military personnel. Doubts and negative perceptions of Carter's work about this issue grew rapidly. Following this event, Reagan obtained a great advance in the polls, presenting himself as the perfect solution for the serious economic recession. Ultimately, Reagan managed to beat Carter by over eight million popular votes and winning in almost every state in the Union. The election day contest was a decisive win for Reagan, led primarily by the concerns of the time that were perfectly aligned with Reagan's program.

### **4.3 Vice Presidency under President Ronald Reagan**

Under Ronald Reagan's presidency, George H. W. Bush finally assumed the office of the 43rd Vice President of the United States. He approached his role by emulating the vice-presidential model established by former President Jimmy Carter and his deputy, Walter Mondale. The Vice President, in this approach, is envisioned as a trusted and close advisor and trouble-shooter for the President. In the early stages of his tenure, Bush faced the skepticism of the Republican's extreme conservatives, who did not trust him and James Baker, appointed as the chief of staff. Nevertheless, Bush gradually won over these skeptics by working loyally to advance the policies proposed in Reagan's agenda. Furthermore, he succeeded in building a personal relationship with the President during their organized weekly lunch with no agenda nor staff. Bush's deep commitment to his vice-presidential role became evident in March 1981, when John Hinckley shot Reagan outside the Hilton hotel. Washington promptly informed Bush about the assassination attempt while he was flying on Air Force Two to Austin. Hearing the news Bush flouht straight back to Washington, however, refusing to land on the South Lawn since he claimed that this privilege was reserved only to the President. During that turbulent day, Bush demonstrated to be composed and respectful of the President's

authority. Despite Reagan recovering, Bush refrained from aggrandising his role, never adopting an “I’m in charge” approach. To underscore this commitment, the following day Bush convened the Cabinet but took his usual chair rather than the President’s one. As elucidated in his previous positions, including his mandate as the Director of Central Intelligence, Bush has always shown a pragmatic and diplomatic approach, even in tumultuous times. His skills proved to be of vital importance to handle foreign missions on behalf of the President. Among the numerous missions, Bush was sent to Europe to convince NATO governments, using his diplomatic and positive approach, to pursue arms reductions initiatives. He indeed published Reagan’s offer to engage with the new Soviet leader to negotiate an agreement aimed at eliminating intermediate-range missiles. Despite his aspirations to the presidential role, Bush always demonstrated his commitment to President Reagan and was grateful to help him to prepare his candidature for the 1984 elections against Mondale. Reagan had an incredible success in the presidential election and succeeded in winning in every state except Minnesota. George H. W. Bush, in the role of Vice President, marked a pivotal turning point in the evolution and enhancement of the responsibilities of the Vice Presidency. Indeed, while respecting the boundaries and never trying to overshadow the role of the President, Bush assumed several responsibilities, continuing the transformation initiated under Jimmy Carter’s presidency and Mondale. Bush, throughout his mandate as the second-in-command at the White House, he chaired task forces to reduce federal regulations and actively fought the influx of illegal drugs into the United States.

Following Reagan’s successful election, George H. W. Bush started to prepare his own presidential candidacy, aware of the challenges he would have encountered. Remarkably, the last time a Vice President had been elected as President was Martin Van Buren in 1836, thus 152 years before Bush. Furthermore, the greatest challenge he had to face as Vice President emerged in 1986 with the eruption of the Iran-Contra affair, commonly referred to as Irangate. The Iran-Contra scandal refers to all the illegal actions committed in order to finance the war in Nicaragua, against the democratically elected Sandinista government. In particular, this funding for the Contras came from the sale of arms to Iran. President Reagan had previously asked the Congress, at the time controlled by Democrats, to help the Contras. However, the Congress denied the aiding and enacted the Boland Amendment, which prohibited the allocation of funds aimed at overthrowing

the communist government in Nicaragua. In 1986 a group of Americans was kidnapped in Lebanon due to the U.S.-supported Israeli invasion of Lebanon. Lieutenant Oliver North of the National Security Council (NSC), attempting to free the hostages and simultaneously finance the war against the Sandinistas, decided to sell the weapons to Iran, subsequently trying to cover it up. In November 1986, a Lebanese newspaper exposed these activities, which unequivocally violated the U.S. policy of not negotiating with terrorists. Bush went on television to defend the administration and claimed that an exchange between weapons and hostages was unimaginable. Notably, Secretary of State Schultz, cautioned Bush against involvements in the weapons issue, safeguarding his political career. Secretary Schultz and Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger firmly opposed these actions, but the operation had the support not only of President Reagan but also of CIA Director General William Casey. Hence, on November 13th of that year, Reagan acknowledged on television that he was aware of the arms sale but maintained that no exchange between arms and hostages had occurred. He sought to justify his actions as an attempt to restore peace with Iran. Subsequently, Attorney General Ed Meese opened an investigation, uncovering that between ten and thirty million dollars had been diverted and turned over to the Contras through a Swiss account. Nevertheless, Bush managed to maintain his pragmatic approach that always has characterized him and apparently this scandal did not seem to have negatively impacted his candidacy.

#### **4.4 1988 Presidential Campaign**

The 1988 presidential election posed a great challenge for George H. W. Bush, who had to exert considerable effort to affirm himself as a strong and independent political figure distinct from Reagan. His major objective was indeed to demonstrate his strength and suitability for the presidency, fighting Evan Thomas' critics, the editor of Newsweek, who portrayed him as a "wimp". On the Democratic side numerous contenders joined the race, including Brice Babbitt, Joe Biden, Micheal Dukakis, Richard Gephardt, Al Gore, Jesse Jackson, Paul Simon, Gary Hart, Bill Bradley and Mario Cuomo. In the initial stages of the Democratic campaign, the frontrunner Bush had to contend with was Gary Hart. However, Hart's candidacy encountered an obstacle due to journalists' stories about his womanizing, leading to his withdrawal. On the Republicans side instead Bush faced competition from the Senate minority leader Bob Dole, the former

New York representative Jack Kemp and the popular televangelist Reverend Pat Robertson.

As the campaign unfolded, Bush's primary challenge emerged from Bob Dole, an American politician and attorney who served as a United States Senator representing Kansas from 1969 to 1996. Notably, Dole, a military veteran, was often perceived as the man of the people, strong in contrast to the perception of Bush's privileged life. In December 1987, Bush had the opportunity to meet and engage in a conversation with the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union Gorbachev. Bush revealed to him that he was confident in winning the election and his desire to further improve relations, if he managed to be elected. The campaign then moved to Iowa where Dole attacked Bush highlighting his involvement in the recent Iran-Contra scandal. Reagan, in response, attempted to support his deputy by releasing declaration of Bush's reservations about the Iran-Contra affair, which was also confirmed by the Chief of the Staff at the time, Don Reagan. Despite the efforts, Dole managed to win the Iowa caucuses. However, even worse was the fact that Bush finished third behind Reverend Pat Robertson. Knowing that Dole was the favoured candidate for the public opinion, winning in New Hampshire became a necessity for Bush. In March 1988, Bush managed to defeat Dole in South Carolina and continued to secure victories in the southern states, ultimately causing Dole's withdrawal by the end of the month. Among the democratic contenders, due to quoting without proper credit, Biden retired from the race. Babbitt, Simon, and Gephardt, instead, dropped out because they could not secure enough primary victories and, consequently, lacked the necessary financial support to continue. Notably, Babbitt's television presence was not favourable, Simon's approach failed to gain enough support, and Gephardt's stance on trade protectionism, despite winning the Iowa caucuses, was not successful beyond the Midwest. As a result, the remaining candidates were Gore, Jackson, and Dukakis. In July, the democrats held a convention in Atlanta, where they officially nominated Micheal Dukakis as their candidate. Thus, now Bush's main obstacle was represented by the Greek American, Massachusetts Governor, Dukakis.

In contrast to Bush's gentlemanly nature, during his 1988 campaign his pragmatic side prevailed, and the strategy he pursued was focused on targeting his opponent's vulnerabilities. Indeed, this election is notably remembered as the campaign that initiated the use of negative advertising in American politics, from both sides. Although initially



reluctant in adopting this strategy, Bush along with his campaign team decided to define Micheal Dukakis. Their scrutiny discovered the conditional release program for convicted criminals in Massachusetts, highlighting the fact that 11 murderers, conditionally released, had escaped and two of them had committed additional crimes. In particular, Dukakis had vetoed a bill that would have prevented first-degree murderers from qualifying for leave. However, it was the Willie Horton case that gained attention. Notably, the case dealt with a convicted murderer who, during a weekend furlough, committed violence on a woman, assaulting and raping her, and stabbed her boyfriend. This event was used as an advertising campaign, but it was widely criticized due to its racial undertones. However, the release of this advertisement did not come directly from Bush's campaign team, but rather from a group of independent Republicans. This permitted Bush to distance himself from the controversy. Once the opponent's weaknesses were brought to the surface, however, Bush was doubtful whether to immediately attack his opponent, fearing that he might demonstrate himself desperate. Nevertheless, during his speech at the Republican state convention in Texas, he decided to opt for this strategy, defining Dukakis as a figure outside the American mainstream on the level of economics, criminal justice, foreign policy and culture. The August Republican National Convention was approaching, and Bush was still considering several names for the nomination as his vice president. Driven by a desire to seek a connection with the younger generation he unexpectedly chose the 41-year-old senator from Indiana, Don Quayle. The choice surprised most of Bush's inner circle, as it was made without external guidance or suggestion. It caught even James Baker, to whom Bush has always turned for his advice, off guard. During the Republican National Convention Bush made an incredible speech, talking about his dream of a "*kinder, gentler nation*". In order to persuade the public, he affirmed that he would refrain from raising taxes, despite being aware of how serious the budget deficit was. This promise of his later proved to be fatal in future elections. Indeed, Bush, who always openly acknowledged not being a great speaker, failed in giving this reassurance to the American people. In contrast to Reagan, who possessed better political instincts and oratory skills. Despite Dukakis's efforts in the last two weeks of the campaign which brought him closer to Bush in the polls, the disparity between the two remained insurmountable. On the election day Bush succeeded in 54 percent of the vote

to Dukakis's 46 percent. Ultimately, despite facing many criticisms, the strategy used by Bush effectively worked, leading him to the presidency.

#### **4.5 Transition to the White House**

In his first days as 41st President of the United States, George H. W. Bush made several senior appointments. Foremost he appointed James Baker as State Secretary, Brent Scowfort as national security advisor, Dick Cheney as head of the Republican chamber of representatives, and Colin Powell as chairman of the joint chiefs staff Bush chose people of great talent in foreign politics, with Scowfort ensuring coordination and efficiency among them and making them work as a united front. Of great relevance, Bush nominated Nick Brady as the Treasury Secretary and Carla Hills as the US trade representative. The relation between Bush and Baker was, undoubtedly, at the center of this administration. Bush had always relied on the support and guidance of Baker, who revealed himself as a great problem solver. As he managed to demonstrate during the Iran-Contra scandal where he promptly elaborated a bipartisan policy with the Congress, based on the new elections request in Nicaragua. Bush is notably regarded for his ability in foreign politics. However, in the first days of his presidency, he found himself facing a crisis caused at the beginning of 1980s, which had led to a deficit of 10 billions of dollars. Thus, the president sought the help of the Treasury Secretary, Brady, to resolve this national credit crisis. By February he asked the Congress for a more rigorous regulation and in August of 1989 Bush signed into law the Financial Institutions Reform, Recovery, and Enforcement Act, which offered 166\$ billion worth of aid to troubled savings and loans institutions and created the new Resolution Trust Company.

George H. W. Bush's tenure as President left a significant influence on the U.S. intelligence community, primarily due to the intricate geopolitical situation, which Bush skilfully managed. Indeed, undoubtedly, the winning point of Bush's leadership was his management of foreign policy and his successes in it. On the strength of his experience at the CIA, Bush was one of the most qualified people in the field. The period of his presidency witnessed several notable accomplishments, with one of the most significant being the conclusion of the Cold War. As Bush accessed the Oval Office, the world's attention was on Eastern Europe, where the Soviet Union was falling apart with even the

CIA caught off guard. Bush, thus, found himself in power at a crucial time in which the international landscape was finally changing. By October '89, the collapse of the Soviet Union, which no one had been able to predict, had long been underway. The symbolic manifestation of this collapse is precisely the fall of the Berlin Wall that had long divided the world between East and West, communism and democracy. This event was pivotal and radically changed the global landscape, requiring readjustment of intelligence in understanding the new political and economic dynamics of the now-former Soviet Union. The establishment of the new world order, based on international law, was unfortunately quickly overpowered in August 1990, when Saddam Hussein dispatched his forces into Kuwait. Bush convened a meeting on the same day with the National Security Council to discuss a U.S. response to Hussein's invasion. Through the use of his great diplomatic skills, Bush rapidly created a coalition against Hussein's aggression. Remarkably, on the same day, the UN Security Council passed UN Resolution 660 condemning the invasion and demanding an immediate withdrawal of Iraqi troops. On August 20, Bush signed National Security Directive 45 stating that the United States had vital interests in the Persian Gulf and was prepared to defend these national security interests. The reasons behind Bush's prompt action were numerous, and prominent among them was the fact that Saddam Hussein, by invading Kuwait, would gain control over a substantial portion of the world's oil supply. This posed potential challenges for U.S. energy policy and oil prices. President Bush's great work resided precisely in his incredible diplomatic skills, managing to get even the most antagonistic nations such as China and Russia on his side. In November, the U.N. adopted Resolution 678, authorizing member states to employ any means necessary to remove Iraq from Kuwait if it did not withdraw by January 15. With no such withdrawal occurring, the U.S. coalition proceeded to overpower the Iraqi military and on February 28 the coalition ultimately declared a cease-fire. Thus, the Gulf War left profound repercussions for U.S. intelligence, underscoring the imperative for the agency to expand its efforts in linking intelligence systems to combat systems while simultaneously training military personnel to use them efficiently and practically. In addition, Bush's tenure witnessed a significant reconstruction of the intelligence community. Initially, Judge William H. Webster was reappointed by Bush as the DCI, guided by the belief that the role of the DCI should not change for every presidency, as it could risk politicization of this figure that should instead be exactly above politics.

However, Webster resigned, leaving the post, after a complicated confirmation process, to Robert Gates. The transformative initiatives brought by Gates encompassed more responsive analysis to the needs of policymakers, as well as better coordination of the use of open-source information and an enhancement of the DCI staff to support its role in the community.

The geopolitical landscape during which Bush took power necessitated a number of major changes within U.S. intelligence, emphasizing the overwhelming need to coordinate intelligence and combat systems more effectively. Despite the great diplomatic and foreign policy prowess Bush demonstrated during his four-years tenure, he failed to convince the American people again. His defeat against Democratic candidate Bill Clinton was mainly dictated by the severe economic recession in which the United States found itself. President Bush's abilities demonstrated in the foreign field proved to be not enough to convince voters, who demanded a stronger domestic policy that could revive the economic situation. Furthermore, his promise to never raise taxes was not kept because of the too high deficit, for which Bush did not find any other plausible solution. So, this mix of distrust and discontent with the domestic policies pursued during his term did not allow Bush to be re-elected in 1992.

## 5 Conclusion

Bush's life resembles that of a superhero. At the age of 18 years old, George H. W. Bush fought in World War II, becoming the youngest Navy pilot and earning the Distinguished Flying Cross. Following his graduation from Yale University, he decided to follow in his father's footsteps and pursue a career in public service. He began his political career by pursuing two terms as a Congressional Representative from Texas. Subsequently, he went on to undertake extremely important roles including serving as the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations and as the head of the U.S. Liaison Office in the People's Republic of China.

After encountering substantial obstacles by the rancorous Congress, Bush succeeded in obtaining the position as Director General of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). His approach was a group-oriented one, which aimed not only to restore morale within the agency but also to regain the CIA's credibility in the eyes of the general public. At the time of Bush's arrival, the agency was in the spotlight, but not in a favourable way. Following the publication of the Family Jewels Report in the 1970s, a series of scandals and illegal acts committed by the agency came to light, creating a deep distrust towards the Intelligence Community. The CIA had effectively become the nation's enemy that needed to be fought. To accomplish the goal of regaining trust from both the public and the government, Bush recognized that enhanced coordination among the various intelligence departments, coupled with the necessity to communicate truthful and unbiased information to political leaders.

Following his resignation, Bush had to figure out what to do next, deciding to embark on the path to become president. In the contest among the Republican candidates, Bush faced a formidable challenge from Ronald Reagan, who managed to win the 1980s election. Unexpectedly, Reagan selected George H. W. Bush as his running mate, who serves as Vice President for a full eight years. At the end of Reagan's second term, Bush began preparing to run for president. In 1988 he was elected as the 41st President of the United States of America, becoming the only man in the course of American history to have assumed both the office of DCI and presided over the Oval Office.

The analysis of Bush's career, coupled with the history of the intelligence community's one, is useful to better understand the intrinsic importance of coordination between the information provided by the intelligence community and the White House.

Indeed, history has taught us that lack of coordination can often have serious consequences and accidents on the nation, for instance the Iran hostage crisis in the 1970s. From exploring Bush's performance as DCI we can therefore understand that, despite that the CIA's world is often drawn as a secretive one, transparency, accountability but above all, respect for ethics and morality must always remain central pillars of the organization. Bush's stewardship as DCI offers an example of how such principles, when positioned as a central objective, prove vital to the effective functioning of intelligence agencies. Through his ability to coordinate with President Ford, Bush was able to revitalize the agency and promote its effective and functional operation. During his tenure in the White House, he tried to ensure constant coordination between the Oval Office and the intelligence agencies. Notably, this was demonstrated in his ability to manage international relations and challenges by providing effective leadership for the country. Thus, his legacy shows us that coordination and the promotion of transparency are cardinal principles for a country's leadership.

In conclusion, Bush can be characterized as one of the most prominent and beloved figures in America. His manner, his diplomatic skills and leadership, and his positive, team-oriented approach won the hearts of many Americans. But, above all, he has managed to garner the immense respect and loyalty from the Central Intelligence Agency, in which he holds a special distinction. Notably, the CIA headquarters have been named after President George H.W. Bush, to honour his legacy. Bush died at the age of 94 in 2018, eight months after his much-loved wife Barbara, marking the history of the 1970s and 1980s.

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