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Of Truth and Foreign Policy

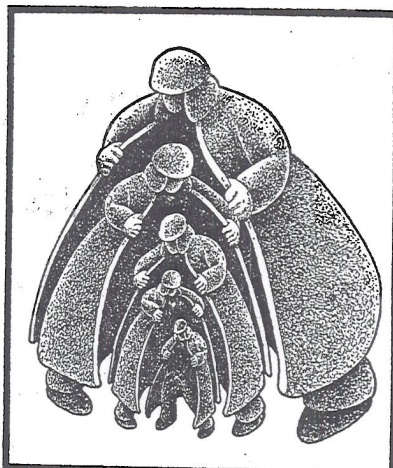
To the Editor:

Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, Guatemala, the Dominican Republic, Cuba and Chile. The Congo, and now Angola. Secret money, secret arms, secret plots, secret assassinations, all in the name of democracy, peace and freedom. Where is it all taking us? Where will it all end? What will become of the American Republic in its third century when it is poisoned by its own lies and its own duplicity?

We have often maintained that any system avowedly based on the perversion of truth and the disregard of basic human liberties would destroy itself. We have comforted ourselves that Communism would never last because in denying human integrity it would devour its own strength. Why then are we secretly aping the Communists in their self-destructive tactics? Has honesty lost its value for us? Truth its usefulness?

It begins to look as if the sands of Watergate have not yet run out. Our Government is still doing things it ought not to do, and doing them in secret, explaining them with the old self-blinding excuses that good ends justify bad means and that the other fellow will do them if we don't do them first. It begins to look as if the Secretary of State has become an anachronism, still following the philosophy and pursuing the devious and discredited tactics of the men who went to jail.

Now we learn at last that one man in the State Department last summer had the courage to say no and resign in the face of the Administration's



Paul Richer

secret Angola policy. He did what many should have done in the Vietnam years instead of pointing out the disasters ahead and then knuckling under and staying on. We may honor this man, who courageously refused to acquiesce in a clandestine policy which he saw to be self-defeating.

Another \$25 million now for secret military operations in Angola? No! Use the money to expose the illegal activities of others in the beleaguered and confused country, but stop imitating them. Only then can we call the kettle black. Only then can our democracy regain some of the lustre that has been so tarnished by our flagrant use of international dirty tricks. Honesty, especially with ourselves, will prove the best policy.

THOMAS E. DRAKE

Bryn Mawr, Pa., Dec. 15, 1975