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The CIA Role

Congress Must Define It

What kind of covert intelligence and para-military operations should the United States engage in abroad? That question should have been resolved before the Senate began confirmation hearings on George Bush, chosen by President Ford to be director of the Central Intelligence Agency.

Congress is as confused and divided as Americans in general on this subject. We are only now openly confronting the fact that our government has been involved in assassinations, attempted assassinations and a host of other covert operations that many Americans would prefer not to know about. Congress must define the CIA's role and limits.

Naivete or cynicism or both characterize the views of such conservative senators as Strom Thurmond of South Carolina and Barry Goldwater of Arizona, on the one hand, and liberals such as John Tunney of California and Dick Clark of Iowa on the other.

Sens. Thurmond and Goldwater, both Republicans, seem to think the CIA will be a good boy from here on if we will just leave it alone.

On the other end of the spectrum, Sens. Tunney and Clark, both Democrats, said Monday they would oppose a \$112 billion defense appropriations bill if it provided money for the CIA to use in covert operations. They and other Democrats compared the fighting in that southwest African nation with the Vietnam war and argued that any CIA involvement would lead us into another Vietnam quagmire.

Are Sens. Tunney and Clark saying in effect that every situation of conflict in the world is like Vietnam? That if we are involved at all, the first thing you know we will have half a million troops there? Vietnam has been traumatic for the



Tunney

Thurmond

country, but it should not have produced results like this among thinking people.

In our view, the United States has a legitimate interest in the outcome in Angola. It is not our business to control that country's domestic affairs. But neither is it the business of the Russians, the Cubans and the South Africans, all of whom have intruded forcefully. Given this situation, the United States should assist moderate Angolan forces that are not controlled by the Communist invaders of Angola. And we should help those forces to avoid being controlled by South Africa, which may very well dominate them if nobody else helps them significantly.

It is silly to suggest that we cannot do that without repeating what we did in Vietnam. By that logic, we should never engage in any covert activities abroad. The sad fact is that, if we did not, the new colonialists of the world would be having field days everywhere. That hot little team of imperialist Russia and its client state, Cuba, could upset democratic and non-democratic governments from Zanzibar to Paraguay if everybody just stood aside and watched.