

# Opinion

## Keeping a secret

Attorney General Edwin Meese claims that declassifying the number of documents currently on the government's top secret list would curb the recent wave of espionage. A wave that has been wreaking havoc on America's internal security system. The proposal contradicts the policy of the Reagan administration, but it makes sense.

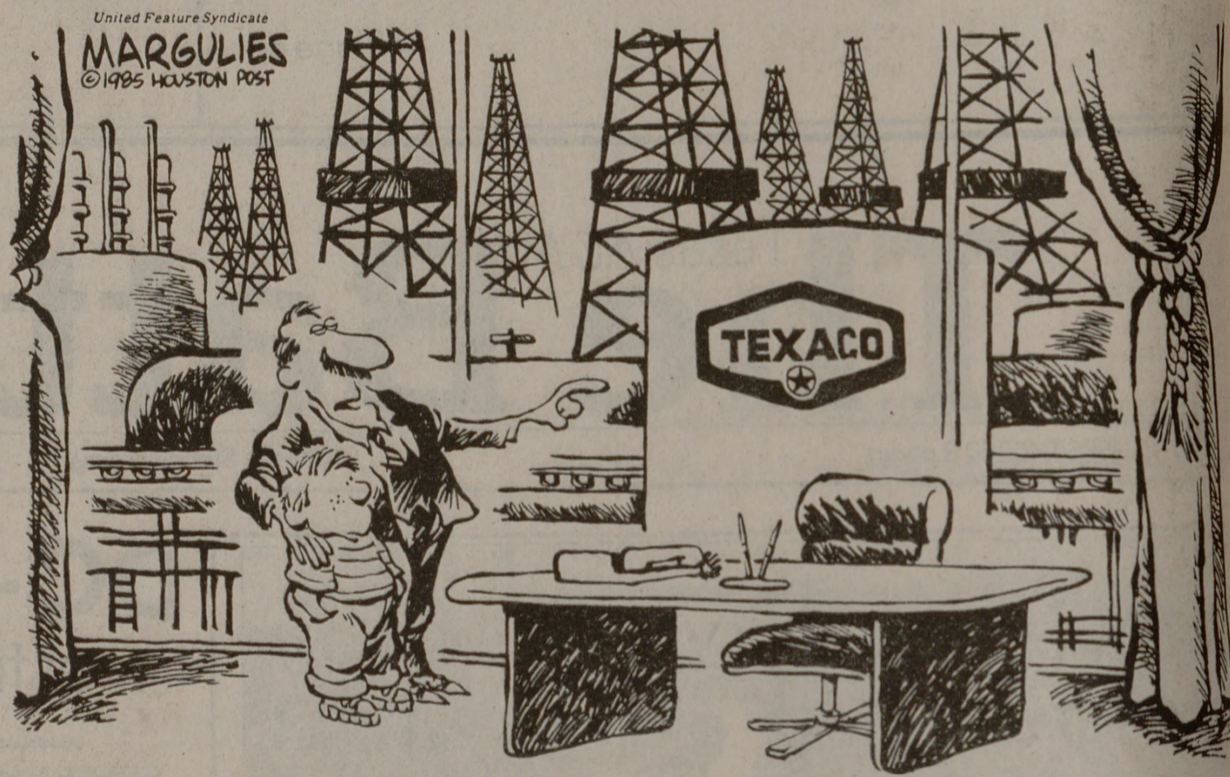
The fewer documents that have to be protected, the easier it is to guard them. Unfortunately the Reagan administration seems to think the more classified documents the better.

A 1982 executive order, which remains in force, calls for increased classification of government documents. In 1984 the administration classified nearly 20 million pieces of information, a 9 percent increase over 1983. In addition, the Defense Department now requires every Pentagon official to withhold technical data and contract information from the public.

With the increase in protected information, internal security systems are being spread too thin. We need to guard our national secrets, but not sacrifice our security by using our resources to protect information that doesn't need protection.

If the Reagan administration would stop trying to obstruct the free flow of information to the people, we might be able to minimize the damage of the recent spy epidemic.

The Battalion Editorial Board



"SOMEDAY, SON... ALL THIS WILL BE PENNZOIL'S ..."

## Give to the needy defense contractor of your choice

Since it is Christmastime I am making a fervent plea to my readers for the "Hundred Needy Defense Contractors."



Art Buchwald

Suspended by the Navy, shunned by the Air Force and boycotted by the Army, the hundred needy defense contractors will be wandering the streets for the holidays unless each one of us comes to their aid.

Let me give you a case history of just one of these unfortunate souls. His name is Corporal Dynamics. He was formerly a general and the most successful defense contractor in America — which is why he had a private jet, a chauffeured limousine and a hot tub in Georgia.

Dynamics was a founder of the military industrial complex and a friend to five presidents. Fifty senators were beholden to him because he gave them PAC money. Then one day tragedy struck.

But let him tell it as he told it to me from his wooden bench in Lafayette Park. "I woke up one morning and discovered that without my knowledge a sales clerk had piled on extra costs for spare parts on our all-weather Army barracks night-lights. It wasn't much money — a million here, 10 million there, an occasional 50 million when no one was looking. While each overcharge was chicken feed compared to what the night-lights cost, there is always some wise guy in the Pentagon who tries to make a big deal of it.

"As soon as I heard what was going on I became dumbfounded. I called in the sales clerk and asked him why he

had been overcharging our best clients. He said they were getting the stuff too cheaply as it was. Besides, since we were the only ones making night-lights, how could they say what they cost? After some persuasion he agreed to drop the light overcharge, provided we jacked up the research and development costs for a canteen cup we were testing.

"This made perfectly good fiscal sense, so I told him it was OK with me. Everyone was happy until some malcontent in Army procurement blew the whistle on us.

"The next thing I knew the FBI demanded to speak to me. Then I demanded to speak to my lawyers. They said they would talk to me in exchange for my house, my car and my cellular telephone.

"To save his neck my sales clerk started talking to the Justice Department.

Everyone was getting surly so I decided to plead 'no contest' to bilking millions of dollars from the Defense Department. I was tossed out of the company.

"You are now looking at a man who faces the grimmest holiday season of his life. I have no money, I have no job, and because of the scandal I can't play golf at the Army-Navy Country Club for three months. But I still have my pride and I don't want charity."

I asked him what he did want.

"I'd like my title of general back. Who ever heard of the Defense Department giving a contract to a corporal?"

And so you have heard the story of just one of the neediest contractors in America. Can you enjoy your holidays knowing Corporal Dynamics will be huddled over a grate this festive season?

His friends have deserted him, the

military no longer talks to him, and his wife ran away with an inspector general.

Before you go to sleep this evening think of Corporal Dynamics and put yourself in his place. Try to imagine what it is like to be hounded by a power-mad Justice Department.

And then multiply Dynamics by 99 more who are sharing the same grate — contractors who have been indicted, are waiting to be indicted or have offered to testify against their closest friends. No matter what the status of his case right now, a defense contractor still deserves a decent Christmas.

While all the neediest contractors march to a different drummer, they have one thing in common. They all wanted the biggest buck for the bang.

Art Buchwald is a columnist for the Los Angeles Time Syndicate.

## Mail Call

### Editorial too kind

EDITOR:

Since 1977 62 colleges and universities have partially or totally divested their economic holdings in American corporations and banks with investments in South Africa. Since 1980 31 cities and 10 states have passed some sort of divestment legislation. They have divested for one reason — it is the only peaceful way to end apartheid and bring about equality in racist South Africa.

Last week the issue was presented to the Texas A&M Faculty Senate. Importantly, the senators did not vote on the crucial issue of urging the Board of Regents to divest, but only on a resolution forming a committee to "study" the issue of divestment.

How did the Senate respond? Some senators left early, before the vote, while others talked about "spending the credibility" of the Senate on an international issue. One senator argued that they should be concerned about minorities at A&M, while others stated that there were human rights violations throughout the world (in football parlance, these are "end runs"). Not one senator stood up and spoke in favor of the resolution. The Senate voted 42-13 not to "study" divestment.

Considering that in South Africa during the last 15 months, more than a thousand innocent blacks have been killed while peacefully demonstrating for rights we take for granted, I think The Battalion Editorial Board was too kind labeling the Senate's vote a "message of apathy." It was unconscionable.

Terry Anderson  
Associate Professor of History

### Something fishy

EDITOR:

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following is a letter to the editor of the Dallas Times Herald. The author requested we reprint it here.

Despite the "thorough investigation" your paper has conducted of Texas A&M's football program, some puzzling questions still remain.

1. Haven't the vast majority of these allegations been examined before by the NCAA? I recall at least two separate NCAA investigations (1979 and 1981) in which most of these allegations were examined and all found to be baseless.

2. Why are almost all the incriminating sources so questionable? Most of the named sources who accuse A&M of NCAA violations were either kicked off the team for drugs or disciplinary reasons or "left the team under clouded conditions." Are these the only sources available?

3. Could the Aggies possibly be paying football players that much money? It is hard to believe that the Aggies would pay \$20,000 to a player who never contributed on the field. Given that the best players would receive the most money in such a system as your paper describes, and that 157 players are listed on the A&M roster, it appears the Aggies' "payroll" would put the Cowboys' to shame. If this is really true, then...

4. Why haven't the Aggies been winning more football games? If

the Aggies have been paying these exorbitant sums for years, it seems reasonable that they should have been the best team in the conference for years, unless...

5. Might the other SWC schools just possibly be cheating, too? If A&M has so massively violated NCAA rules and yet has played only mediocre football during this timespan, it seems reasonable that the better schools must have been cheating even more. Therefore...

6. Why isn't the Times Herald investigating all SWC schools just as determinedly as it is A&M? I don't know, but perhaps it can be explained by the possible answer I give to the next question.

7. Why is the Times Herald perceived as biased by some readers? Perhaps a paper is perceived as biased when some sources (who were not kicked off your paper's staff for disciplinary reasons) claim that unethical reporting practices, such as payments to get players to talk were used.

I seriously doubt your paper will have the guts to print these questions (let alone the answers) in their entirety. However, rest assured that readers of newspapers will read this and be able to examine the merit (or lack thereof) of all positions.

If A&M is guilty of these violations, they should receive an appropriate punishment. However, I do not know yet the truth of your paper's allegations. I do know that something smells fishy — and the main source of that stench seems to be in Dallas.

Chris Bowers

### A basket case

EDITOR:

Ever since I read Karl Pallmeyer's columns, I have wondered if he was demented. After reading about his hatred for Christmas, I am almost sure that he is a basket case. Christmas is a time that people worldwide celebrate the spirit of giving and caring. We do this in remembrance of God's gift to mankind — his only begotten son, Jesus Christ. When a person hates something that beautiful, I can only pity him and pray that one day he will see the light.

Merry Christmas to all!

Eric L. Self '86

### Accepting the challenge

EDITOR:

Students Against Apartheid was at the Faculty Senate meeting which rejected erecting a divestment committee. The Senate did not see apartheid as a unique situation, or why South Africa should be singled out for divestment.

Many faculty members felt that injustice exists around the world, and they gave examples such as the caste system in India, women in Arabia, rebels in Afghanistan and the government of Ethiopia starving its people.

The Senate speaker, Jaan Laane, felt that the Senate could not possibly do justice to consider these questions adequately.

In Laane's letter to The Battalion (Dec. 13.) he stated that he would endorse a study of "human rights violations throughout the world by groups with the resources to do so effectively."

SAA has participants from all these regions, as well as a divestment committee, and would like to take up the challenge. Furthermore, we urge other campus organizations to do the same.

We will compile reports from various organizations and individuals, publicize them during the next free speech day and submit them to the Faculty Senate.

The reports should describe the location and nature of injustice, recommended action, preferably a comparison with apartheid, and if the issue of divestment is relevant. This report should answer the questions that the faculty committee would have addressed so that action on human rights can be taken in the spring by those who feel morally obligated.

Norman Muraya  
President, Students Against Apartheid

### Of mice and meals

EDITOR:

I'm writing this letter concerning an incident that occurred in Sbis Dining Hall during dinner Wednesday.

Some students brought mice into the dining hall. They put the mice on the floor and kicked them to the other tables where other students were eating. Some other students were throwing the mice to other tables.

I believe that incidents like this should be stopped and the students involved should be punished. I don't like this kind of behavior in a dining area and I believe that I am not speaking just for myself.

Sbis is a dining place, not a playground. Incidents like this should be left outside.

Sergio Olavarrieta

Letters to the Editor should not exceed 300 words in length. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters for style and length but will make every effort to maintain the author's intent. Each letter must be signed and must include the address and telephone number of the writer.

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