

Into a den of thieves

Let's hear it for Gerald R. Ford, President Richard Nixon's most recent selection for his vice president.

Chosen from a presumably select group of "men and other individuals," as the President himself called it, Ford has made a large sacrifice in agreeing to accept the post recently vacated by convicted tax evader Spiro T. Agnew.

After 25 glorious years in Congress, it seems Ford has placed his political future in jeopardy by willingly joining a ring of suspected criminals.

Even the San Clemente executive seemed to realize that he might be in for trouble. Otherwise, it would be unusual for him to mention in his speech to his fellow countrymen that he wanted to choose someone who could, if necessary, step into the Presidency, as has been the case for seven other administrations.

It could be, therefore, that Ford, once described by former President Lyndon B. Johnson as a football player who played too long without a helmet, will be forced to drop back and punt.

A Congressman with a clean record for all those years, a college football star and a Nebraska native, Ford had everything going for him. Now he wants an office in a den of hoodlums.

Ford already has begun changing his ideological

stance. Originally, he said he thought the President should reveal the information on those now famous tapes. Now he says he wants to qualify that statement. He's not sure the President should release them to the court.

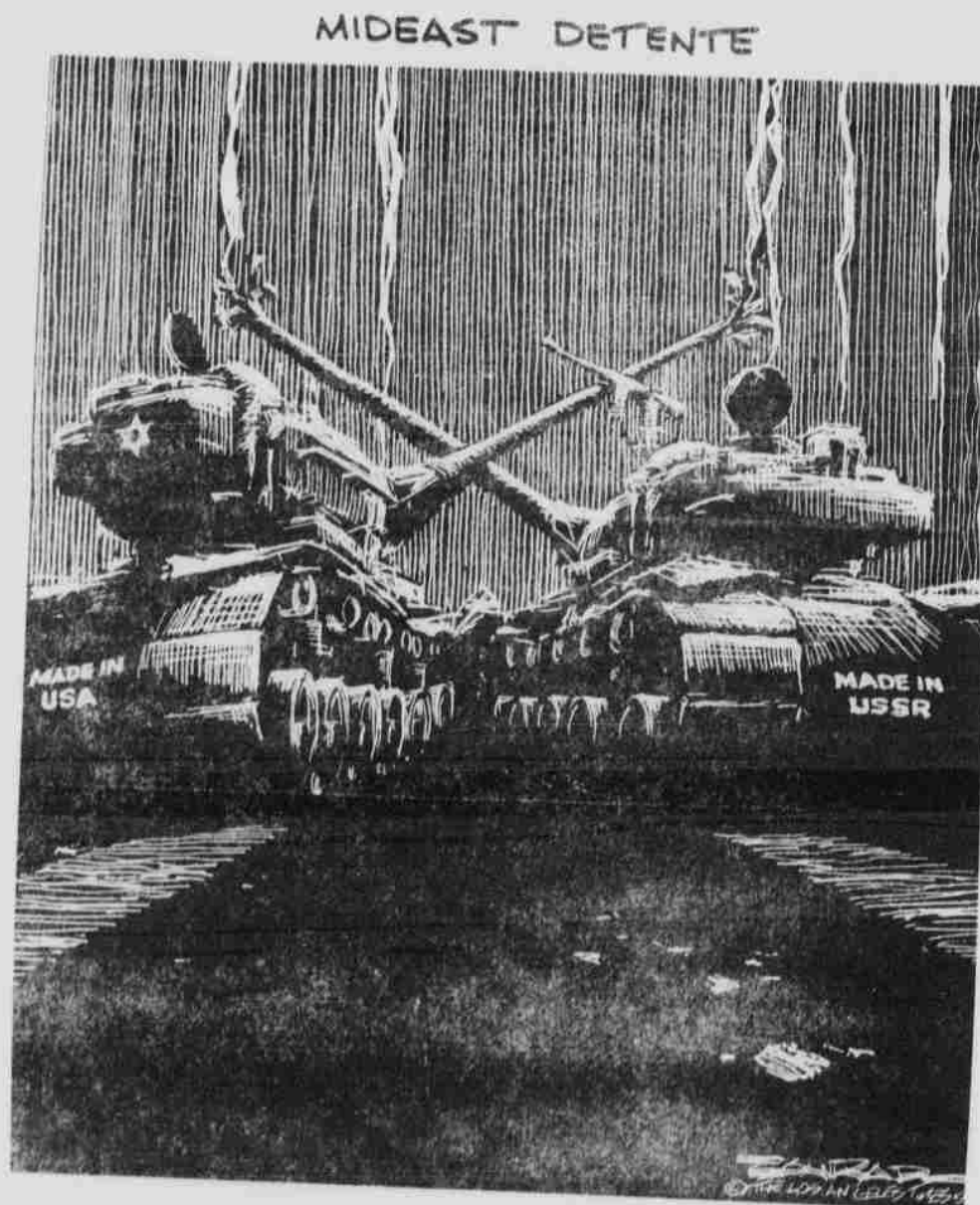
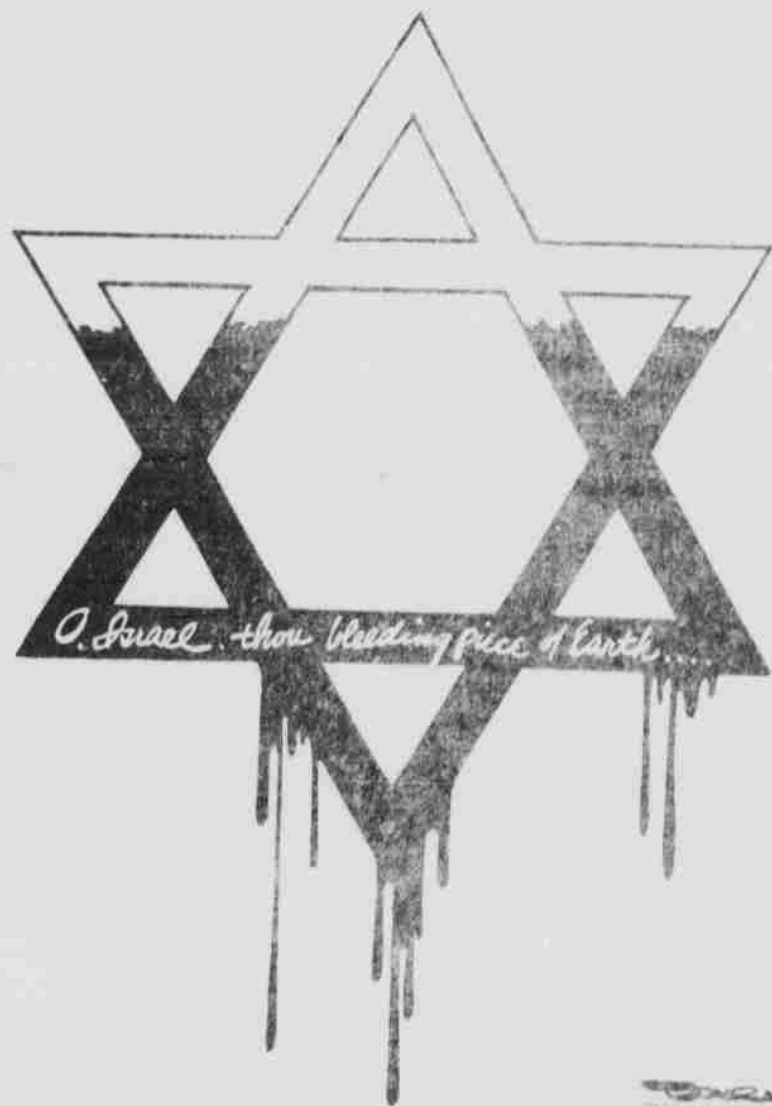
Could it be that Ford, already kissing his wife on the front pages of the nation's newspapers, is headed for a fate similar to Nixon and his former sidekick?

Ford says he owns about \$9,000 worth of debentures in a paint company and his wife has a few inherited stocks. He plans to resign from the board of directors of Rosepath, Inc., a label manufacturing firm which paid \$1,800 a year for attendance at six meetings. He owns three pieces of real estate: homes in Washington's Virginia suburbs and Grand Rapids, Mich., plus a condominium in Vail, Colo.

Let us hope that he sticks to his crystal clear record and that he never finds out that an industrial state like Michigan probably would be willing to grant kickbacks to a famous son.

Let's also hear it for Sen. Carl T. Curtis, who will be on East Campus Friday. It must have made the senator happy during his recent trip to Argentina to finally be called senior Senator, after being Sen. Roman Hruska's junior for so long.

Tim Anderson



U.S. inferiority complex due to lack of leaders

With the passing of Spiro Agnew, it seems an appropriate time to review the direction America is taking, or perhaps not taking.

Since the demise of the Vietnam war, Americans seem to be less and less sure of themselves. The boisterous, confident national spirit that launched the Peace Corps now seems lost in a state of national self-consciousness, or embarrassment.

Americans no longer see themselves as the good guys, and often unquestioningly accept themselves as the bad guys.

Along with this national inferiority complex comes an apparent confusion or lack of purpose. To a great extent this seems to be because of the near absence of any viable leadership.

If the 60s were called a time of leaders without causes, the 70s should be known as a time of causes without leaders. And without these leaders, America suffers.

This leadership vacuum seems to be a direct result of a growing feeling of betrayal, or perhaps shaken faith, on

john michael o'shea distant thunder

the part of the American public toward government.

Americans have an almost unshakable faith in the political system and in the integrity of high government office.

There is something sacred about high national office that shields it from the petty political tricks and scandals of lower office. A town mayor may get kickbacks from construction contracts, but not the vice president of the United States.

There have been scandals in government before, but never so extensive or inescapable. Americans could not hide from it. Their faith was shaken, not in their form of government, but rather in this particular group of politicians.

Distrust of public servants is nothing new here. It was perhaps this long-held Yankee skepticism, coupled with the public outrage at Watergate, that moved Agnew to try for House impeachment proceedings rather than face a grand jury.

Other politicians know and fear the dangerous chain reaction that Watergate has started. And they begin fearing their own pasts. Agnew would never have been removed from office by Congress.

The current plight of politicians is similar to that of police. I recall reading how a group of policemen on the Niagara River formed a human chain into the current to pluck out a man being drawn swiftly towards the falls.

As I read this piece I didn't see our modern policemen doing it. Rather, I saw Keystone Cops heroically drawing the man to safety.

Perhaps this is where the erosion starts. Police once were seen as good natured, heroic and helpful. But for too long during the 60s the police were portrayed, and often justly so, as tools of political and racial oppression.

Modern police, not the Keystones, had snarling dogs in Selma and went berserk in Chicago. Like the politicians, they now are not trusted.

The moral of these ramblings on trust and leadership is simple. In this period of skepticism, the burden of proof is on government.

America needs direction and leadership, and the mere selection of a new, strong vice president will not provide it.

The administration must prove its integrity immediately or doom itself to three more years of being a government without a country.