

Official 'dialogue'

Ambassador Richard F. Pedersen spoke with a small group of students Tuesday in Centennial College. It is extremely unfortunate that more students did not have the opportunity to talk with this State Department official. Probably no other experience could demonstrate to students more clearly how discouraging it is for individuals who attempt to influence a government which is unresponsive to the will of its citizens. Pedersen's "dialogue" with the students was as graphic, though less dramatic, an example of governmental neglect of citizen opinion as the fizzled-out Moratorium or the chaotic 1968 Democratic convention.

Although his pretense for speaking to the students (as he is doing on other college campuses across the nation) was to see what they think, Pedersen had no intention of really engaging with the students on critical questions. He was here simply to spout the Nixon foreign policy. It was a computerized bull session. Q. Why is the United States involved in Vietnam? A. To assure South Vietnam of the right to determine their own future by democratic methods? Q. Will we become militarily involved elsewhere in Southeast Asia? A. DOES NOT COMPUTE? It was impossible to determine where the opinions of Ambassador Pedersen stopped and those of the State Department began. Pedersen occasionally looked like a product of "social self-criticism" American State Department-style.

If American citizens can trust the pollsters, they must assume that a majority of the people of the U.S. support President Nixon's Vietnam policy, i.e. paced withdrawal of troops and gradual Vietnamization of the war. At the same time, if a poll was undertaken, it would show that a majority of America views the war as a mistake and would oppose extending involvement in Southeast Asia. Yet Pedersen could say that "the U.S. is acting responsibly in Vietnam," there is nothing to guarantee that the U.S. might not fight in Laos, and our interest in Laos is to "restore the conditions of the 1962 Geneva Agreements." Change the date to 1954, and where have you heard that statement before?

"There are," according to Pedersen, "some things in this world you can't talk about." That's right. And some of the things about foreign policy that can't be talked about are the real reasons for erroneous decisions. There is no moral justification for the Vietnam War. Pedersen and the State Department won't say that the real reasons we are involved are economic interests, power politics, fear of Communism and our own glorified sense of nationalism.

But foreign policy and international politics is a secret game played by governments. No practical, pragmatic politician could afford to divulge certain information to the people on such matters, and no one is more pragmatic than Richard Nixon. The point of it is, the government, by and large, does not tell the truth when it does release information. So please Mr. Rogers, don't send your officials to tell us the U.S. in Vietnam is acting morally and responsibly. Just tell us the truth.

Jim Pedersen

DAILY NEBRASKAN

Second class postage paid at Lincoln, Neb.
Telephones: Editor 472-2588, Business 472-2589, News 472-2590.
Subscription rates are \$4 per semester or \$6 per year.
Published Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday during the school year except during vacations and exam periods.
Member of Intercollegiate Press, National Educational Advertising Service.
The Daily Nebraskan is a student publication, independent of the University of Nebraska's administration, faculty and student government.
Address: Daily Nebraskan
34 Nebraska Union
University of Nebraska
Lincoln, Nebraska 68508



"You can't leave. You've just arrived."

Second thoughts for liberals

by FRANK MANKIEWICZ and TOM BRADEN

Washington — A certified liberal will rise in the Senate Thursday morning to make a statement which will upset the liberal line.

It is well that Tom Eagleton, Missouri's freshman Democrat, should be the chosen instrument, for on everything from civil rights to defense appropriations Eagleton has taken positions which liberals regard as "right." Thus they cannot fail to accord him a hearing when he tells them that Birch Bayh's plan for direct election of the President could lead to disaster.

In the wake of the election of 1968, liberals in both parties panicked in the face of the George Wallace challenge and resolved not to spend another Election Night wondering whether they'd soon be pleading their causes in the House of Representatives. There emerged the Bayh plan, simple and cloaked in one-man-one-vote Democratic raiment. It swiftly passed the House and is now the Senate's pending business.

THE BAYH AMENDMENT provides simply that the man who gets the most votes — anywhere in the country — is elected President, provided he gets at least 40% of the votes cast. That, it was thought, would do away with the specter of Wallace.

But as Eagleton began to examine the possibilities, he began to reconsider his earlier support. He will stress, in his speech Thursday, at least two major drawbacks — both of which, he believes, would be fatal to the preservation of the system Bayh intended to save.

The first of these is that a candidate could be elected who carried only a handful of states, perhaps only one. In 1968, for example, Hubert Humphrey carried only 13 states. If he had lost 12 of these by narrow margins, and increased his margin in New York to the amount by which Lyndon Johnson carried that state in 1964, Humphrey would have led Richard Nixon in the popular vote, though losing 49 of 50 states. Under the Bayh amendment, Humphrey would nevertheless be President.

SURELY, so Eagleton reasoned, unless

the United States has become as homogenous as, say, Costa Rica, it is unacceptable for a man to be elected President with so limited a geographic distribution of the popular vote. So much for drawback No. 1.

Drawback No. 2 lies in the Bayh amendment's provision for a runoff if neither major candidate wins 40% of the vote. Far from eliminating strong third-party challenges, this provision would guarantee them.

First, reasons Eagleton, many voters in 1968 swallowed their natural inclination to vote for Wallace only because they knew theirs would be a "wasted" vote — that Wallace could not carry — for example, Illinois, New Jersey, Ohio or Michigan.

BUT IF the first vote were "free" — to be followed by a probable runoff between the two major candidates — Wallace might easily have received 7% more of the popular vote. He would thus have forced a runoff and he could have gone to Humphrey and Nixon and bargained with them for his support.

Eagleton thinks the Bayh amendment would turn a U.S. presidential election into a Southern primary-at-large. If every vote counts equally where cast, and if there is to be a runoff, those with the special ideology would form their own parties for the first election.

U.S. elections would be contested by — for example — a Black Party, an Anti-Black Party, a Small Winter-Wheat Growers Party, an Anti-Income Tax Party and so on. Each could get its votes in the first election; then bargain them off in the runoff.

EAGLETON and his co-sponsor, Kansas Republican Sen. Robert Dole, are basing their counterproposal on what they call the federal system plan. Based on intensive research by Washington attorney Myron Kurzan, the Eagleton-Dole amendment would preserve some features of the present electoral college while guaranteeing that the truly national popular choice would always win. It is not without complications which is why it must be discussed in a future essay.

THE DAILY NEBRASKAN