

Warren: blackout aids GI's

by DAVE BRINK
Staff Writer

"I think the public has a right to know everything there is to know...particularly about the war."

An exception must be made, cautioned Gerald Warren, the Deputy Press Secretary to President Nixon, in some foreign policy matters.

The news embargo placed on the South Vietnamese invasion of Laos, Warren explained in an interview with the *Daily Nebraskan* Tuesday, was based on the decision of commanders in the field. The news blackout, he added, was designed to protect troops taking part in the action.

THE COMMANDER'S (Gen. Abrams) intention, according to Warren, was to confuse the enemy, not the American public.

"This President...has no motivation to lie to the American public" about Vietnam, he stated. Although he knows there is "honest...and sometimes heated opposition" to his policies, Warren added, the President believes they are based on a rational plan to get U.S. troops out of the war.

The President, he said, has adopted a policy of allowing South Vietnam to determine its own destiny. Warren said it is not a question of whether or not they win after the United States leaves but whether they can assume the role America has now.

HE SAID HE HAD great faith in the ability of the South Vietnamese to succeed in the Laotian campaign. Under "no circumstances" will Nixon send ground troops into Laos, he added.

The Hastings native, a '52 graduate of the University, was on campus Monday and Tuesday to participate in the annual Master's Week program.

After nearly 20 years in journalism, beginning as editor of the *Daily Nebraskan* in 1951, Warren joined the

Nixon administration in 1969. Warren said his friendship with Presidential Press Secretary Ron Ziegler and some other people in the Nixon administration was the principal reason he took the job.

Although a registered Republican for several years, Warren said he had never been active in party politics. He claimed he was dedicated to his newspaper career and would return to it someday.

SHUNNING THE LABEL of interpreter or public relations man, Warren said he saw himself as a spokesman. The Deputy Press Secretary outlines his role as trying to portray the President's feelings and opinions as accurately as possible to the press.

Although in frequent contact with the President, Warren described his main job as being a "point man" for the White House Press Office.

Ron Ziegler handles the day-to-day contact with Nixon, he explained, while his job is to speak to and answer queries from the press.

According to Warren, the President understands the role of the press in government and understands that his Presidency "should be held up to an examining light by the press."

IN WARREN'S OPINION, Nixon feels no great antagonism toward newsmen. He gets summaries of the important news in papers and magazines each day in addition to continuous reports on breaking news.

Nixon "does not react instantly to network news stories," Warren stated, but he (Warren) and Ziegler keep "pretty close tabs" on news shows and wire services. If they make a mistake concerning the facts of an issue we inform the newsman and he usually appreciates the information and corrects the error, Warren said.

"By and large the people who cover the White House," Warren said, "are highly

motivated, dedicated and basically objective."

In spite of the "very demanding life" required of White House personnel and the strains on his time and family life, Warren said his job has been a worthwhile experience which helped him to "understand some of the problems of government and maybe help solve some."

"Very few people have the opportunity to serve a President," he concluded, "and it's an honor and a privilege to be one of those persons."

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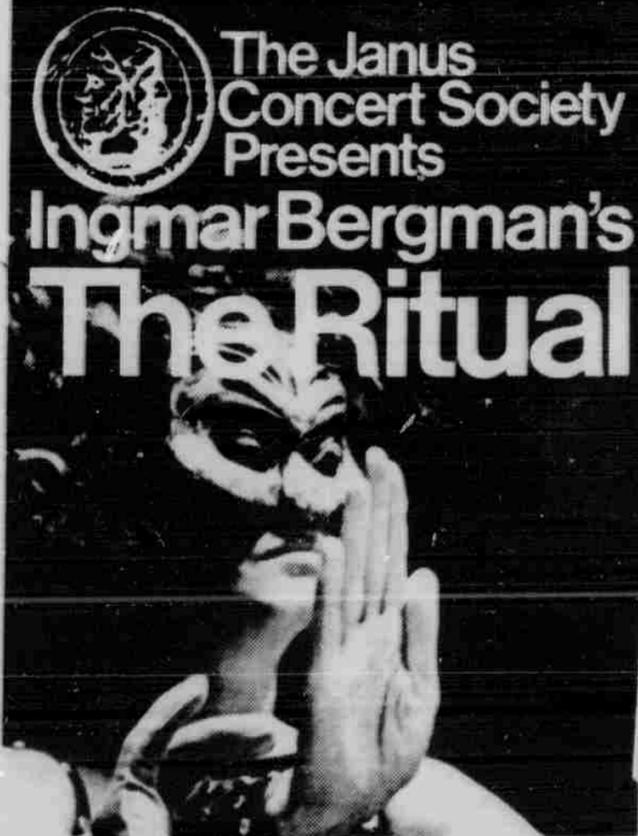
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